WOMANKIND

00094147

C. M. YONGE

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.
CLASS

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

WOMANKIND.

94147

BY

CHARLOTTE MARY YONGE.

SECOND EDITION.

London:
MOZLEY AND SMITH,
6, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1877.

f.01
396
Yon. Wom
94147

LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL,
QUEEN VICTORIA STREET.

TO THE DEAR MEMORIES

OF

F. M. Y.—a. Y.—C. K.

AND TO OTHER INFLUENCES AND EXAMPLES

THAT CANNOT BE NAMED AS THEY ARE STILL WITH US,

THESE THOUGHTS ON WOMEN ARE

Dedicated.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

WOMAN'S STATUS 1

CHAPTER II.

NURSERY TRAINING 8

CHAPTER III.

EARLY RELIGIOUS TRAINING 14

CHAPTER IV.

VIRTUES AND FAULTS OF CHILDHOOD 19

CHAPTER V.

HOME, SCHOOL, OR GOVERNESS 29

CHAPTER VI.

LESSONS 38

CHAPTER VII.

CULTURE 50

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE

CHILDREN'S PLEASURES 56

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEENS 67

CHAPTER X.

RELIGION 72

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG-LADYHOOD 80

CHAPTER XII.

CHARITY 85

CHAPTER XIII.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL 90

CHAPTER XIV.

REFINEMENT AND FINERY 99

CHAPTER XV.

DRESS 108

CHAPTER XVI.

AMUSEMENT 119

CHAPTER XVII.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN 128

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAGE

BROTHERS AND SISTERS 135

CHAPTER XIX.

FRIENDSHIP 145

CHAPTER XX.

YOUTH AND MAIDEN 152

CHAPTER XXI.

COURTSHIP 159

CHAPTER XXII.

WIVES 177

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISTRESS AND SERVANT 191

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION 202

CHAPTER XXV.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS 211

CHAPTER XXVI.

MONEY-MAKING 222

CHAPTER XXVII.

STRONG-MINDED WOMEN 231

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PAGE

UNDERDOING AND OVERDOING 240

CHAPTER XXIX.

HEALTH 252

CHAPTER XXX.

HOME 264

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE WORLD 274

CHAPTER XXXII.

AUTHORITY 284

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SORROW 298

CHAPTER XXXIV.

GOING IN 312

CHAPTER XXXV.

OLD AGE 322

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER I.

WOMAN'S STATUS.

A WOMAN can hardly arrive at middle age without having thought over some of the duties and opportunities placed in the hands of her sex. *To think* is in the present day almost equivalent with *to express;* and it is in the hope that the expression of some of my thoughts may be in some degree an assistance to a few readers, that I venture to throw a fresh contribution into the seething cauldron of sayings and opinions with which we are regaled in the present day.

Not that I have anything new to say—only that which is so old that it may seem new. I have no hesitation in declaring my full belief in the inferiority of woman, nor that she brought it upon herself.

I believe—as entirely as any other truth which has been from the beginning—that woman was created as a help meet to man. How far she was then on an equality with him, no one can pretend to guess; but when the test came, whether the two human beings would pay allegiance to God or to the Tempter, it was the woman who was the first to fail, and to draw her husband into the same transgression. Thence her punishment of physical weakness and subordination, mitigated

by the promise that she should be the means of bringing the Redeemer to renovate the world, and break the dominion of Satan.

That there is this inequality there is no reasonable doubt. A woman of the highest faculties is of course superior to a man of the lowest; but she never attains to anything like the powers of a man of the highest ability. There is a difficulty, however, in generalizing; because, owing to difference of climate, habit, and constitution, there is less inequality between the sexes in some races than there is in others. The Roman woman was superior to the Greek, the woman of the West to her of the East; and there is far less disproportion between the negro and negress than between the coolie and his wife.

Savage life renders the woman the slave. The man, having to the full the animal instincts of pugnacity and indolence, puts all that is toilsome upon her, multiplies wives in order that he may have more obedient hewers of wood and drawers of water, and, as all other male animals are the handsomer, he lavishes all adornments on himself.

Perhaps the very first stage from savagery to civilization is marked by the preponderance of ornament on the female side. As soon as woman ceases to be the mere squaw, adornment is viewed as primarily her due. Her condition, where there is civilization without Christianity, is extremely variable, and chiefly dependent on the national character; and everywhere, in the very lowest classes, there is the tendency to bring her to the squaw level. In the upper ranks, and among classes fairly at ease, the usual tendency has been to regard the splendour and indolence of the chief wife as testimonials to the wealth and grandeur of her lord and master. Thus, African chieftainesses are fattened on milk like pigs for a cattle-show; Chinese ladies cultivate unserviceable fingers and toes; and Persian princesses of old deemed the loom degradation. Seclusion has in these cases a good deal depended on the trustworthiness and understanding of the women. Burmese women, who are of fair

average capacity, are not immured, while Hindoo and Chinese ladies are; and before Mahometanism had made the Arabian fashion universal, the Persian ladies do not appear to have been inmates of harems; while European women always went at large, though with less liberty in Greece than among the Romans and more northerly nations.

The state of the Jewish women seems to have varied. Orientalism and imitation of the nations around lowered them at times, but the purity of the standard of faith on the other hand uplifted them. And in order that Holy Scripture might be truly universal, no maxims enforcing undue subjection have there received the seal of inspiration, so as to become permanent, even though the difference between the Eastern and Western minds may be traced every time an English child is taught to say the Tenth Commandment, when it is sure to try to forbid coveting the wife before coveting the house.

It was from these people of Judah that the most beautiful image of dignified and perfect womanhood proceeded. "The words of King Lemuel, which his mother taught him," though seasoned with the salt of Inspiration, are clearly a contemporary picture, typical as well as applicable to all ages; and the nation that produced a Hannah, an Abigail, and a Shunammite, might well be able to conceive such a being as the virtuous woman.

One of the very remarkable points in the history of woman and her position is the absence of any account of how polygamy came to be abolished, and of any direct precept on the subject.

The words of our Lord applying to divorce plainly direct us to understand that "in the beginning," when Adam's prophetic command was given that "a man should leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they *twain* should be *one* flesh," a single wife was implied, and that a plurality was subsequently only permitted "because of the hardness of their hearts;" while every possible precaution was taken for humanity and consideration towards the inferior wives. The desire to rival other kings in the multitude of female attendants seems to

have plunged even the best of the sovereigns of Israel into the harem system, which was directly contrary to the Law; and up to the Babylonish Captivity ordinary Eastern habits prevailed.

But in the New Testament, the duty of monogamy is established, and taken for granted from the first. How was this? Had the Jews learnt it from their licentious Greek and Roman masters? In some degree perhaps they had, for the Roman had a much higher standard of domestic virtue originally than what he practised; but it seems more likely that the great reformation under Ezra and his followers, which cleared away idolatry for ever, and made the Jews exact observers of the Law of Moses, really purified and elevated them so much, that the plurality of wives came to fall into entire disuse and disrepute—this being no doubt assisted by contact with European civilization, even in its corrupted state.

The position of woman was at once recognised in Gospel teaching. The Blessing conferred upon the holy Mother of our Lord became the antidote to the punishment of Eve's transgression; and in proportion to the full reception of the spirit of Christianity has woman thenceforth been elevated to her rightful position as the help-meet.

There, however, comes in the woman's question of the day—Is she meant to be nothing but the help-meet? If by this is meant the wife, or even the sister or daughter, attached to the aid of some particular man, I do not think she is. It is her most natural, most obvious, most easy destiny; but one of the greatest incidental benefits that Christianity brought the whole sex was that of rendering marriage no longer the only lot of all, and thus making both the wife and the maiden stand on higher ground.

"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," had been said to Eve. Without a husband the woman had hitherto been absolutely nothing. Wife, mother, or slave, were her sole vocations; and if her numbers became superfluous, polygamy and female infanticide were the alternatives.

But the Church did away with this state of things. Wife-hood was dignified by becoming a faint type or shadow of the Union of the Church with her Lord. Motherhood was ennobled by the Birth that saves the world; and Maidenhood acquired a glory it had never had before, and which taught the unmarried to regard themselves, not as beings who had failed in the purpose of their existence, but as pure creatures, free to devote themselves to the service of their Lord; for if His Birth had consecrated maternity, it had also consecrated virginity.

The dim idea of pure dedicated creatures had, in the ancient days of Rome, suggested the order of Vestal Virgins. Rome had grown so corrupt, that it was almost impossible to keep up even the small number of these priestesses; but there was enough of the idea latent in the minds of the nation to make the consecration of Christian purity congenial; and the high Roman courage, now refined, soon produced its whole army of brave Virgin Martyrs. Then it became understood that woman might look to no earthly lord, but might turn all her yearnings for love and protection to Him who has become the Son of Man, "her celestial Spouse and King," and that her freedom from other ties enabled her to devote herself wholly to Him. And how? Not only by direct contemplation and devotion, but "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

So began the vocation of the dedicated Virgin, the Deaconess, the Nun. The life in community became needful when no security could be had save in a fortress; and this, together with the absolute need of the feminine nature for discipline and obedience, led to the monastic life being, with rare exceptions, the only choice of the unwedded throughout the middle ages; but this safe and honourable refuge for the single daughters of families did, to take it on the very lowest grounds, much to enhance the estimation in which their secular sisters were held.

It is not, however, my purpose here to dwell on monasticism. All I want to do is to define what I believe to be the safe and

true aspect in which woman ought to regard herself—namely, as the help-meet of man; not necessarily of any individual man, but of the whole Body whom Christ our Lord has left to be waited on as Himself. He is her Lord. He will find her work to do for Him. It may be that it will lie in the ordinary course of nature. It is almost certain that she will begin as help-meet to her father or brothers; and to many, there comes the Divinely-ordained estate of marriage, and the duties and blessings it entails, all sanctified through Him. It may be, again, that her lot is attendance on a parent—still a work of ministry especially blest by Him; and so with all those obvious family claims that Providence marks out by the mere fact of there being no one else to undertake them. And for those who are without such calls, or from whom their tasks have fallen away, what is there left? Nay, not left as a remnant, for He has been there through all. Their Lord is ready for their direct, complete, uneclipsed service in whatever branch seems their vocation. His Church is the visibly present Mother to guide them; and as daughters of the Church their place and occupation is found.

Previously they had no status, except as appendages to some individual man. Now, as members of one great Body, each has her place and office, whether domestic or in some special outer field. And in proportion as this is recognised, the single woman ceases to be *manquée*, and enjoys honour and happiness.

The change makes less visible difference to the married woman; because, by the original Divine ordinance, her husband has always been so much her lord that her duty to him becomes a sort of religion, and her cares as wife and mother occupy her mind and affections. Thus there is no state of society or religion—at least, where the sacredness of the tie of marriage is understood—that does not present instances of the exemplary woman, whose affections have been a law to her, and have trained her in self-denial, patience, meekness, pity, and modesty. History, and the experience of travellers and of missionaries, alike prove this fact.

But the woman destitute of such a direct object for her obedience, cares, interests and affections, is apt, when her first youth is over, to crave for something further, unless she have recognised her relation to the universal Body and to its Head. As long as girlhood lasts—and this often is a good way on into life—she has sufficient food for her interests, at home or abroad, in studies or amusements; but let her home break up, or let her not feel herself a necessary wheel in its machinery, she becomes at a loss. The *cui bono* feeling comes over her studies; amusements become weary, or she finds herself looked at by the younger generation as *de trop:* and she either sinks into dull routine in a narrow home, or is an aimless guest at country houses; or, on the other hand, she takes to being one of the equally purposeless travellers and sight-seers—ever roving, ever gazing; or lastly, she struggles for the position and privileges of a man. His independence she has, and a very doleful thing she finds it—vanity and vexation of spirit to herself; and while she strips herself of all grace and softness, she becomes ridiculous and absurd in his sight, and renders him averse to the culture to which he erroneously ascribes her unfemininenes.

But let her feel herself responsible to the one great Society of which she is a part, and let her look for the services that she can fulfil by head or by hands, by superintendence or by labour, by pen or pencil, by needle or by activity, by voice or by music, by teaching or by nursing—nay, by the gentle sympathy and earnest prayers of an invalid; and the vague discontent is appeased. She has found a vocation, or it has been found for her. It may be an outwardly secular life that she lives, and there is no visible difference between her pursuits and those of others; but they are dedicated, they have their object; and if her heart rests in Him, she is content.

I do not say that she will be in the least a faultless woman, or that she may not expose herself to ridicule—as the lady with a hobby, the clerical woman, the fussy district-visitor, or the like. This depends upon tact, and the minor morals and graces

of life; nor is it always possible to be as pleasant in looks and ways in advancing life as in youth—at least, not to *man*kind. To women, whose affection is more really valuable to a spinster, it is always possible to become more and more agreeable, as the period of rivalry is outgrown, and there comes

> "The heart at leisure from itself,
> With time to sympathize."

It is only as a daughter of the Church that woman can have her place, or be satisfied as to her vocation. And happily, many who do not in word or heart feel for the Church as their Mother and Queen, yet do her work, looking to her and their Lord and King, and so are "blessed in their deed."

CHAPTER II.

NURSERY TRAINING.

I do not mean this for a work on education; but if I am to try to review the scenes and aspects of woman's life, I must begin at the beginning, and look at the little child, and what is being, or may be, made of her.

It seems to me that the weak point of most books on education is, that they say boldly, "Do this, and you will produce that effect," without taking into account the exceeding variation in the dispositions of children, and how treatment that will barely touch one will terrify another, while the delight of one is the misery of another. Of course there are broad rules, and general observations, and to these it is needful to confine oneself. Actual management learns adaptation, and in all cases principles are better than rules, as being both more stringent and more elastic.

Much has of late been said about training and education making the difference of habits between boy and girl. I do not

think the notion can be held by anyone who has often watched the development of the two creatures. The instinct of the boy, long before imitation can have put it into his head, is to drum and strike in a way that never seems to occur to his sister. He is sure to be eager for sticks, and esteems the sight of a horse more than anything else; while she almost as certainly cuddles even the very semblance of a child, and caresses what he beats. Both have a delight in producing a noise, but hers is seldom aggressive like that of the boy.

It often happens, however, that for the few years immediately following babyhood, from about four or five to six or seven, the girl is really the more enterprising and less timid creature; and this has perhaps given rise to the opinion above-mentioned. I believe the chief reason is that the inferior creature is of more rapid growth, and that she is really apt to be the stronger of the two, to say nothing of the fact that her tomboyisms are repressed and complained of, while the poor boy is blamed for his cowardice.

At about five years old boys are often very thoughtful beings. They have just acquired full power of speech and limb, and can fairly understand the scenes around them, while custom has not taken away the novelty and wonder. If they have anyone who cares to converse with them, this is a great period of memorable —often original—sayings, unanswerable questions, and sometimes of precocious religion. It now and then happens that the presage of the future manhood is then to be seen in the child; and it is an age at which perhaps the fairest hopes are entertained—often, of course, to be disappointed, and almost always overshadowed during the time when the growth of the animal frame gains the mastery over the spiritual and intellectual being —often for many years. These little pensive boys are often exceedingly timid, as well as delicate in frame, and their sisters get credited with a great deal more courage, because they are stronger, and either are or seem more daring. Indeed, this age of soul in boys is very apt to be in girls the age of coquetry. Thoughtful mother, aunt, or sister, will bring reflection out in

the boy; while in the girl, notice from any man who wants to amuse himself with her will readily take effect.

She is very amusing, whether she be perfectly simple and unconscious, or whether she take the line of sentiment or sauciness. But is it really for her good? Is it well to let this form of excitement in upon the young life? If she receives it as mere petting, and simply regards the "other party" as her kindest friend and playmate, no harm is done: but it seems to me that there is a certain blighting of the perfect freshness and delicacy of the nature, when the simulation of real love and courtship is permitted. It seems to me to be hard upon the dignity and innocence of childhood, thus to make it ape what it cannot understand, and to desecrate the real beauty of love to forestall it in sport; nay, may not the lingering recollection of such foolish play sometimes assist to make the growing-up girl think lightly of flirtation? It is a difficult subject; but I think it might be impressed on both parties, that "Mamma does not like that kind of play," and that no real happiness would be lost by such restraint.

Some pain, too, might be saved, for *la vieillesse de l'enfance* sets in soon enough; and while the boy becomes a prey to *Berserkar wuth*, and, unless he has his own kind to play with, or else plenty of space and liberty for voice and motion, is a burthen to himself and all his family; the girl loses her attractive kitten-like grace, so that the very admirers who lately called her delicious, and her speeches "rich," now vote them pert and troublesome, and declare that she must be banished to the school-room from seven to seventeen. If she is strong and healthy, "tomboyism" by no means vanishes at this period. It is the best sign for future health, for it to be retained up quite to the "teens." What I mean by "tomboyism" is a wholesome delight in rushing about at full speed, playing at active games, climbing trees, rowing boats, making dirt-pies, and the like. It can all be done with perfect modesty, provided the girls thoroughly understand that what is permissible among themselves needs a little restraint if a boy not of their own family be

among them, and that they must avoid all rudeness. Perhaps it is best, this principle being understood, to leave the carrying out to themselves. With them romping is sure to betray itself by the torn frock, dishevelled hair, and over-heated state of exhaustion; and a little improvement of the occasion generally brings shame and contrition, that will work gradually against the wildness of high spirits. Besides, brothers are almost always fastidious guardians to their sisters' propriety of demeanour, and tell them much stronger truths than will go down from anyone else. Where an act that shocks the elders' notions of propriety comes under cognizance, a sudden sharp demonstration of the shock it really causes, followed up, in a cooler, more private moment, by a little conversation upon maidenliness, based upon the "being grown older," will generally be effectual. Some girls have an instinct about them that never permits them to offend; others have strong frames and high spirits, which make the sense of decorum slow in coming; and a hint that will cover one girl with agonizing blushes is scarcely observed by another—a lecture which will be helpful to one in time of excitement and temptation will be scorned by another as tiresomeness or particularity on the elder's part. For this latter class of girl, one brief sharp sting of censure from father, uncle, or elder brother, will do more than a hundred reproofs from her own sex.

It would be pleasant to believe that, in all cases, a delicate modesty and regard to propriety is the attribute of girls, and that, however rough, noisy, and bouncing they may be from seven years old to twelve, they are sure to soften into maidenly reserve; but, unluckily, experience shows that this is not so uniformly the case, as not to make it needful that the lesson of *retenue* and self-control should be enforced in early girlhood, if we wish to prevent the "fast" and bold development afterwards.

Again I say that perfect liberty in the garden with brothers, without objecting to boyish sports, is generally quite safe; but it is wiser to let it be understood that masculine games such as cricket, or rougher sports, such as climbing, are not allowable with any other boys; and any outrageous laughter, or token of

boisterousness apart from merriment, had better be suppressed. Prudery is a much less danger than forwardness, especially in the present day. Refinement is the real quality that stands between the two evils; but it is one which, if it do not come by happy nature, can be taught by careful repressive influence better than by direct reproof.

The kindest thing to be done by a child is to teach it self-restraint. That the mere training in good manners and ordinary civilization does much in that way, is proved by the exceeding difficulty we must all often have experienced in dealing with persons of the lower classes, from their inability to restrain themselves—nay, their want of appreciation of the possibility. Persons among them, whom we know to be thoroughly religious and high principled, seem to be entirely dependent on their natural temper, and when removed from the restraint of a superior's presence, give way to their natural impulses with absolute helplessness. Sometimes, indeed, we find (as in the curious instance of Archbishop Laud's Journal) that the whole force of religion has to be put in requisition to attain (and not always successfully) those little outward matters of Christian courtesy which gentle nurture makes matters of habit.

In fact, it is a very curious question how much courtesy is an inbred quality, a matter of race. Travellers and missionaries alike agree in telling us that they find the chiefs of savage races "perfect gentlemen;" and it seems plain that high-bred bearing, and grace of manner, are of long inheritance from families sure of their place, used to command, and with too much elevation of rank to encourage meanness or servility. Caractacus or Vercingetorix, Ariovistus, Clovis, or Cerdic, were no doubt men of grand dignity of demeanour, aware of what was due to themselves and all around; and though their free warriors might on one side of their nature be ruthless ruffians, yet in their hours of peace they would no doubt be grave, punctilious, guarded, and as careful about giving offence as men become when deadly weapons are always in their hands.

The main body of the gentry of the civilized world is de-

scended from these free-born lords and nobles; and though of course there has been an immense intermixture from beneath, especially in England, yet a code of honour, courtesy, and natural power of conforming to it, has been handed down, which has formed a standard which everyone who has the tone of good society has learnt to accept, and which becomes natural to the newly elevated after a generation or two.

It is this which proscribes all the meaner faults, by simply regarding them as impossible in gentleman or lady; such, we mean, as listening at doors, looking into letters, playing unfairly at games, and the like—and likewise all struggles for place, rude and rough speech and manner, such as might become personal insult, "giving the lie direct," &c. Whether our behaviour in these matters be Christian courtesy, or mere conventionality, is tested by finding whether we will give way to a stranger or visible inferior as to an acquaintance.

Children of gentle birth learn these things they hardly know how, the happier ones from babyhood, the less favoured by more direct and more painful lessons; sometimes by the contempt and indignation of their companions, or by the unanimous consent of their story-books. And that they are learnt by the great mass of ordinary people is a great safeguard to temper, and prevents many collisions, that might lead to evils far deeper than such as seem to be involved in these minor morals. Good habits, and self-control, seem to be what are especially within the power of education to accomplish. There are things that no external power can accomplish, and that each must do for himself; but the process can be made much easier by enforcing good habits and repressing bad ones.

Some parents teach their children sound principles, but leave them all the trouble of correcting their faults for themselves as they grow older; others take the task of training and correction into their own hands from the first; and we need not say which we think the happiest and wisest way, and which is most likely to save the little ones from those ingrained faults that become besetting sins.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

WHAT are then these habits that can be taught, these faults that can be mastered, in most cases by judicious management? I am speaking now of what can be done by discipline, even more than by personal religion. The soul is, as I said before, very apt to be almost stifled by the animal and physical vigour of the growing boy or girl; there is a great bodily restlessness, apt to lead to irreverence, an impatience of attention to what does not interest the curiosity; and moreover, the outward machinery of the family, or the school, provides a whole apparatus of secondary motives for teaching morality, and fostering the affections that in after life are to find their Home and Object above.

It seems to me to be in the course of Providence that it should be so. The faith of the Patriarchs—seeing at once to the end—seems to answer to the spiritual clearness of the child emerging from infancy; while we have St. Paul's own authority for the likeness of the Jewish dispensation, with its elaborate system of laws, and temporal reward and punishment, to the later childhood, trained in the rudiments by tutors and governors, until the fulness of time, when of course the Christian dispensation answers to the faith of the maturer nature.

Of course I do not mean by this that a child should not be brought under the dominion of religion, or that religion does not often supply direct motives. What I do mean is, that as long as a child is reverent and dutiful, its spiritual feelings may be allowed to grow unseen, and not forced or examined.

I divide spiritual feelings from knowledge. It is *really* the time for learning and training. The actual personal religion that is to be expected and inculcated in these early years must be the regular habit of prayer, and with attention—grafting upon this the asking for what is wished for, and for protection

from anything dreaded. This is the surest way to engender trust, and the sense of dependence on the Father Who can grant what the earthly parent cannot. Nor need we fear the child's asking for trivial things. Any temporal advantage we ask for is probably quite as trivial, and things childish and temporal are the training for things eternal. Reverence is the next great point. No familiarity, no levity, no sportiveness, where holy things are concerned! Acknowledge no offence as more serious than failures here; and above all keep bad examples out of the children's sight.

The Sunday question is a hard one. I believe that in the present day there is an over-fear of Sabbatarianism with children, and that they are left to their own will in the matter, with over-regard to their present pleasure, rather than to their future habits. They are apt to be allowed their choice about going to church, instead of viewing it as an absolute duty to offer their service to God; and they are pitied for the length of the service, instead of being told it is a great privilege to be allowed to come to church at all, and that they will enter into it more when they grow older. Will they? Will they learn thus to consider God's service their first object, and to set aside the lesser objections about weather, comfort, cold, and the like, which make the body foremost? Is a little tedium and restlessness now to be put in competition with the habit of rating the worship of our Maker above our own pleasure? Therefore I believe that whatever amount of church-going is decided on as suitable to the child's age should be regularly insisted on, with due, but not fanciful, regard to health and weather, and with the feeling impressed by our being pervaded with it ourselves, that it cannot be set aside for pleasure or convenience, like anything else. It is a pity that it has become the fashion to laugh at the keeping a Noah's ark for a Sunday toy. There is real benefit in making a difference, and the exclusive enjoyment of so charming a toy on the Sunday helps to give the festival feeling.

The relaxation of distinctive Sunday occupations is producing a serious effect in children's ignorance on religious subjects. It

is startling to find how many boys and girls are left ignorant of the first rudiments of Divinity and Scripture history. How are they ever to learn them at all, if not taught in these early years of leisure? Nor will they regard such teaching as a penance, if it is carried on with kindness and brightness, a very different thing from levity.

Happiest are the homes where a short portion of Scripture is read, with *explanation*, with one of the parents every day, and on Sunday the Catechism, hymns, and sacred lessons, according to age, are gone through and made interesting—best of all by the father. This cannot always be, especially where the father is an over-taxed clergyman; but he at least teaches by example what *is* of chief importance. But laymen, whose leisure day it is, would do inestimable good if they would devote a little time, and a little interest, to their children's religious instruction on a Sunday, showing that they care about it, learning with the little ones it may be, if unable to teach.

If this cannot be, the mother, or whoever in the family is best qualified, should make it a point that in these years of advancing youth—namely from six to twelve or thirteen, or whenever Confirmation preparation may begin—the Catechism should be learnt beyond power of being forgotten, together with its explanation, as well as Scripture history and the more remarkable prophecies, and that there should be a tolerable knowledge of the Prayer-book.

If all is left for the clergyman's few weeks of preparation before Confirmation, he has to spend much time, that ought to be used in strictly devotional training, in teaching the mere terms and meaning of phrases, such as may just as well be learnt at home. In fact, he finds nothing to build upon. What can he do, when young people—children of cultivated persons—come to him with the notion that they are going to be made responsible for the sins they suppose their Godfathers and Godmothers to have hitherto undertaken?

Now it is hard on a child of nine or ten years old to be set down to the small print in a Prayer-book, to learn long answers

by heart. But it is not at all hard, at four or five, to have them put into his lips Sunday after Sunday, or day after day, by the mother, while he thinks it an honour and promotion—till at seven, eight, or nine, he has attained perfect familiarity with the words; and after the first, younger children follow in the track of the elder, and repeat the easier answers, orally learning the harder ones.

I believe it is a mistake to begin with baby catechisms and "First Steps;" it is a mere waste of time and memory. The Church Catechism is more thoroughly known if repeated long before the understanding is equal to the memory, and there is plenty of time afterwards for breaking it up into questions and explaining it. Many well-managed children are uncomfortable if they do not repeat "their Catechism" straight through on the Sunday, and think it a great privilege to do so to Papa or Mamma, Godfather or Godmother. Even boys, if thoroughly used to it before going to school, regard it as a home institution, and are really pleased with the assistance that they have found it at school. For their sakes, however, the parent's undertaking it is doubly desirable. They may be irreverent and idle with a governess, but scarcely with a parent.

A little piece should be explained and illustrated from some of the countless manuals in existence, and which are adapted to any age; and by this means there can hardly fail to be a fair working head-knowledge (at least) of "all that a Christian ought to do and believe to his soul's health." With elder children a good deal may be done in this way by writing.

It is also—I say it deliberately—a great unkindness not to cause children to lay up in their memories a good store of passages of Scripture so securely that agitation or grief can hardly disturb the power of recalling and repeating them. Our own sleepless nights show the value of such recollections; and no one has ever acted as a nurse without feeling the value of having Psalms or soothing passages at the tongue's end, to repeat when it may not be possible to read, besides that the voice in reading is hardly ever so pleasant to hear as in repeating. Such facility

is only to be acquired in very early youth, and ought to be cultivated. The wretched old custom of punishing by giving chapters to be learnt by heart, produced a reaction which has led to its being uncommon to know anything but the Psalms, and not many of them; but let it be really felt that the acquisition of a small portion to be repeated on Sunday pleases the parents, let that portion be well chosen, and perfection at certain stages be stimulated by some suitable prize, such as a photograph of a sacred subject—and the learning will become a pleasure. Hymns are also valuable, but I should put the Psalms and passages of the Bible first; and as to all catechisms but that of the Church, they are all very well as guides to the teacher, but to have them committed to memory is only wasting the time that might be given to holy words of perpetual benefit. The Sunday Gospels are very suitable for such learning; but when taking the Psalms, it is better to select—for if the child begins at the beginning, those from the third to the seventh interest it so little, that the task becomes a burthen. The Songs of Degrees, the twenty-third, fifteenth, and nineteenth, are the best to begin with. If the children go to the Daily Service, or take part in a family reading of the Psalms and Lessons, this must not be taken as supplying the place of real instruction. Too much—even with the new Lectionary—is read at a time, besides that, for great part of the year, the First Lessons are scarcely comprehensible to the very young. A portion about the length of a Sunday Gospel should be individually read every day, with some kind of comment, either oral, by questions, or from a book. This, as before said, is best of all done by a parent (even without talent for teaching), but if regularity cannot be managed, let the child take the same time on some serious subject with the governess. If the choice be between governess and mamma, mamma will have the preference; but if mamma's occupation or illness leaves uncertain and much-prized gaps for play, the religious lesson will be viewed as an infliction.

Whatever the child learns, it should be carefully shown is mere knowledge, not to be confounded with goodness, and that

real dutifulness and conscientiousness stand far higher than perfect repetition of hymns, or accuracy in naming the Kings of Israel and Judah.

But technical religious instruction is a scaffolding, the lack of which is an immense hindrance in after life.

CHAPTER IV.

VIRTUES AND FAULTS OF CHILDHOOD.

And now, what are the virtues that are to spring out of this instruction and training in early childhood, and how far should they be consciously connected with religion?

Truth stands first, of course. Happily, public opinion in England is in favour of truth; and there is hardly a child of any sort of education who does not view falsehood as the worst crime within its range. Little children's failures in veracity are apt to be from three causes—timidity, insulted reserve, and romancing. The timidity, apparently, is best treated by indulgence to the utmost to confessed faults, and such pitying severity to the deceit, that the poor little mind may be convinced that "honesty is the best policy." The child who denies because it thinks you have no right to question, is generally of stuff strong enough to bear and understand the penance; and the romancing inaccurate child wants constant training and being brought to book, sometimes laughed at, sometimes reproved, for every foolish misstatement; and every means should be taken of setting before it instances of the evil consequences thence resulting. Though less bad in the child than the other causes of untruth, it is more in danger of being permanent, and of being a life-long defect. Some persons' minds really seem destitute of the power of distinguishing details; they will persist that it is "all the same," after being convicted of some flagrant misrepresentation, and cannot conceive what is found fault with. I believe

education does much to remedy this fault, because, though everyone knows only too many ladies and gentlemen subject to it, many are strictly accurate, while it is almost universal among the uneducated of all ages. Try to get to the bottom of any story current in any locality, and the contradictions and absurdities you meet with make you wonder what process is gone through to bring the capacity of giving trustworthy evidence.

Children in general *need* not labour under this defect. Their memories are stronger than—and are not loaded with such a mass of past circumstances, all much alike, as—those of their elders; and unless hereditary bias, or bad example, be very strong, they can generally be entirely cured, and where inaccuracy is inveterate, be placed on their guard.

Trustworthiness seems to me the next highest perfection in a child. I place it before obedience, because that depends more on the elders than is always allowed for, and may be only fear or pliability, whereas trustworthiness must be conscientious. The true kindness to a child is to make the least command law, and to correct resistance as disobedience. Everyone allows this, but everyone will not take the trouble, or has not the strength, to carry it out, and put an end to petty rebellion in trifles. Almost every child, too, has the instinct of trying its strength with its keeper, and experimenting how far it can go. It will disregard the nagging prohibition, or the whining threat, because they have both become unmeaning; and when after a time it does something unbearable, it has a sense of injury that unexpected anger has fallen on it without sufficient warning.

The very same child will be strictly obedient to a person whose power it has learnt to respect, and wearisomely insubordinate under a feebler or more careless dominion; yes, and often when it has given a promise, or feels itself upon honour, it will be scrupulously careful not to transgress, out of sight, orders it would disobey *in sight*. Such a child is thoroughly hopeful, and there is every reason to think its sense of duty will grow wider and higher. And to make children trustworthy, or keep them so, trust them entirely, until you perceive some

abuse of your trust, and then show all your grief, but give hopes that trust may be earned once more. Make also as few rules as possible for conduct out of sight, especially when a child is really forgetful. Remember that your rules may be causes of wrongdoing if they are such as cannot easily be kept.

Do not show suspicions till you can get them fully cleared up. And when, as sometimes happens, something utterly inexplicable occurs, dismiss it when you find it unfathomable. Your grief and dismay have been, very possibly, as complete a lesson as you could have given, had you traced the fault, and been able to convict the offender. Never lay the whole community under punishment till the thing is explained. You will only get into an undignified position, and stimulate the worst side of all the natures.

Scarcely a large family or school but has experiences of some mischief wrapped in mystery; and in talking these over, in after life, it will often turn out that the poor children suspected have been so bewildered and worried by the interrogation, as to lose all certainty whether they were guilty or not. In these cases, it is better to treat the thing as if it had not happened, than to make it a reason for continued distrust.

Temper seems to me to be moulded by the health and circumstances of the child, while it is still an infant. Healthy happy children are generally good-tempered for life; and where they fail is in occasional fits, either of obstinacy, which is misused strength of will, or of passion, which is the uncontrollable outbreak of excitability. It is weakness and tender nerves, suffering in forms neither understood nor explained, that produce the fretful temperament, which lasts even after health has been gained. There is an age too, some little time after speech is perfect, when children, aggrieved perhaps at losing the caresses of infancy, are very apt to get into a whining tone, and bring all their requests and grievances (sometimes their lessons) in the most pitiful voice. It is better to stop this at once, by speaking gently but cheerfully, and saying "I will listen to you, if you will speak in your own voice." It really is an important thing

to correct; for there is nothing more hurtful to a woman's position in her family, than the habit of letting her voice become plaintive, the moment she is uncomfortable or aggrieved. Sometimes, too, an ordinarily cheerful child falls into a state of weak spirits, feeling everything an injury, and with tears springing on the slightest cause. This is sometimes connected with change of teeth, sometimes with rapid growth. In past days, there was little mercy to a child in this condition; she would be scolded, laughed at, or threatened with crying herself into a thread-paper; and the other children, believing her wilfully naughty, teazed her pitilessly. Now a tonic, a glass of wine, or a breath of sea air, is generally the remedy; but with all consideration for the child, it is best, at the same time, to give some gentle stimulus to help her to acquire self-control, since it is not likely that she will pass through life without many more periods of depressed power. Fretfulness, whether in the nature, or merely the effect of temporary languor, is best dealt with by inducements on the side of reward. The punishment should only be its natural consequence. "My dear, I cannot take you this time—you were so tiresome, and teazed everyone so much."

Never let anything be *got* by fretting, or the power of the engine will only too soon be discovered. Practically, the most fretful person is sure to be the despot of the family; but for her own sake, even more than that of others, the tyranny had better be averted. And when conscience and determination shut the mouth, the spirit of piteousness is in the way to be starved out.

The two strong forms of temper are much more easily dealt with. Passion of the kicking and screaming form is so terrible a memory to the victim, that the will is likely to be in favour of subduing it; and it must be very bad management indeed, that has not cured a girl of it by ten or twelve years old. The test whether the evil is conquered, and not merely that the lady-like instinct is awake, is whether *word* as well as gesture is restrained.

Obstinacy often becomes a kind of stupor, in which the child

has gone into such a state of passive resistance, as not in the least to understand the efforts at persuasion, or the attempts at coercion, aimed at him. I believe the best way then is to observe that he is not in his senses, and leave him to recover. There is so much pride in sullenness, that to pay it too much attention flatters and increases it. The way to be really mortifying is to avoid making the point of contest too important, especially if it be what it is quite impossible to *make* another person do. "Ye may gar me greet, but ye canna gar me tell," says Madge Wildfire; and when the child refuses to speak some word, or accost some visitor, punish it at once for the disobedience, but do not enforce the matter till after the mood has passed, and the zest of resistance is over. If possible, avoid that dreadful state of dogged perseverance which becomes a trial of strength of will; but come off with dignity, by observing that since the child is so foolish, it must be punished, and then carry out the punishment, not letting it feel that it has gained the victory.

After all, though judicious management spares the child from giving way to the most visibly obnoxious forms of any kind of temper, the remedy is only from within. External management trains in self-control, and gives power of repression. Religious principle and practice in the child alone can really conquer the enemy, whether anger, obstinacy, or repining.

These tendencies, together with failures in obedience, and falsehoods from timidity, are the errors the young spirit can thoroughly appreciate as sins and temptations, learn to repent of, pray against, and struggle with. It seems to be thus providentially ordered that childish faults, which do not necessarily leave a fatal stain, should be made the means of teaching the soul to depend on Divine help, and strive against temptation.

Thus it is that the strong character, capable of doing far the most in the world by and by, is often apparently "the most naughty," before the force of will has been turned into the right direction; and thus the finer qualities of the nature make it more sensitive to jars and misunderstanding than the easy,

docile, tranquil, disposition, which slips along smoothly, without having to fight out its place and to contend with itself and all around.

Quarrelling, though of course depending much on temper, is not by any means a criterion of the unworthiness or worthiness of children. There are quarrels and quarrels; and it often happens that the most unsatisfactory and neglected children are far more peaceful and amiable together, than those who are the most carefully watched and taught. "A little grain of conscience made him sour," is as true of the child as of the man; only instead of sour—that is, exhausted and spoilt for want of outlet—we should read turbulent and effervescing. A child with a strong sense of duty, truth, and uprightness, will in endeavours to assert these principles, often be far more quarrelsome than the placid, easy-going, smooth-tempered beings who dislike "a fuss" far more than a transgression. Again, one child of fixed determination and ready invention will lead and fascinate a whole troop—for originality is not so universal but that the flock is happy to find a guide—till a second, with an equally strong will, brings war into the play-ground. As to knowing who is in the right, that is generally a hopeless matter. As Manzoni has told us, there is very seldom a dispute where right and wrong are so neatly divided that each party can take the whole of one or the whole of the other; and children, with their vehement little passions distorting their point of view, have hardly the power of giving an impartal statement of their mutual grievances.

The habit of squabbling is, however, such a miserable thing, and one so likely to be lasting, and to be destructive to family peace and happiness, that it should be quashed by authority. The dispute had better be treated as the fault. The game should be put an end to at once, and the children separated for the time. Where it is a question of mere taste, and having one's way, the senior child's undoubted *right* should be maintained; but that same elder should be instructed that it is the privilege and grace of age to concede to the younger and weaker; and in nine cases out of ten, this will be willingly done, either from

generosity, or dislike of seeing the little one unhappy; but justice should always be upheld, no one ever should be *forced* to yield a right, it only begets discontent, dislike, and reprisals.

"*Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum,*" should be the law of the nursery. Yes—*ruat,* not *cœlum,* perhaps; but the reign of the favourite. Nurses and motherly elder sisters are apt to make everything give way to the baby-pet, and allow it to become the torment of the older children, whose toys are taken away to gratify its destructiveness, and whose important little occupations are violently broken up to gratify its volatile spirit of imitation or curiosity. To the elders the threading of beads, or daubing of pictures, or making of models, may seem even less important than baby's gratification; but to the child they are the business of life, pursued with a sense of purpose and industry, and it is both harsh and mischievous to sacrifice them uniformly to the little one. True, he is very likely to squall, and obstinately insist on being amused with nothing but invading the occupation that engrosses the older one; and the child may be advised—but so as to leave it entirely a matter of free-will—to give way to him or else put the coveted object out of sight. There will generally be enough love to the little one, and dislike of being ill-natured, to lead to this being done, and probably to a more prudent choice of opportunities another time. If possible, children of this more reasonable age ought to have some refuge from the meddlesomeness of the lesser ones. It would greatly conduce to their comfort, and even to the affection of both parties. If there be not room to keep them in separate nurseries, surely quiet, rational sports might be carried on in the drawing-room or school-room.

Giving up and forgiving are great duties, and a child is capable of both, but compulsion will not succeed in either case. Moral influence alone is effective; and in a well-ordered family the dues of age never should be contested—the right of the eldest in succession to the first choice, the outing, the decision, and the authority, should be fully established, but tempered by training in the generosity of setting oneself aside. This system

obviates a good deal of disputing, by making it clear who is to to say what is to be done, and who is to be obeyed. A great deal of quarelling is really for want of an acknowledged leader, a good deal more is a sort of police. This is not said with any view to its toleration—for it is a grievous blot on the bright page of childhood, a sad marring of family affection—but chiefly to show that it may be more the fault of the parents than of the children; and when there is good sound principle and love at the bottom, the effect on the grown-up fraternity is sometimes to enable them to say the most unpalatable home truths to one another in the most uncompromising manner, and then forget and forgive, as if nothing had happened. However, family courtesy should hinder the violence; and therefore all mutual rudeness and bickerings should be put down with the utmost decision, whenever they crop out. Blows, kicks, pinches, and the like should most assuredly be punished sharply, especially from the stronger to the weaker, and treated as a serious offence. Some parents think it leaves less ill blood, where boys are fairly equal in strength, to let them batter and buffet it out their own way, and this may be a matter of family temperament and management, only to be dealt with by experience; but between boy and girl, or among girls, hurting by deed should be treated as a shameful offence. There is also great need to watch over that strange melancholy instinct for giving pain by way of feeling power, which exists in most boys, and results in tyranny and bullying. Tortures to see how much fortitude a little girl will display are very hard to detect, because the victim is apt to exert a dumb resolution, half Spartan, half cowardly; but they would, we imagine, be best cured by a father's indignation first, and then by reasoning on the cowardliness of the action. Teazing a whining girl is more difficult to deal with, because the boy can never be convinced that her folly does not make her fair game, and that he is not using wholesome discipline, and this to a certain extent is true; but the borders between good-humoured banter and tyrannical tormenting, are so very easily passed, that the only test is whether the girl be really unhappy, and the boy

enjoying—not the fun, but—the infliction of unhappiness, and then he must be punished.

Girls' teazing of one another is chiefly nagging. In its worst kinds it is a development rather of schools than families. The feminine nature is not one to improve by being massed together, and the girl does not naturally like those of her own sex who are not old enough to be companions, and yet so little younger than herself as not to elicit the sentiment of motherliness. Spite and jealousy are dangers among girls thrown together without relationship, and without the gradations of age necessarily modifying family rivalries; and where the elders form one division and little ones another, as in schools, the younger are simply troublesome, instead of bringing out the sentiment of affection. And as all parties are too old to fight it out otherwise, the tongue is employed to taunt and teaze, and a lasting bad habit is formed. Such things do prevail among sisters, but less commonly. The tendency is often, however, on the part of the eldest girl, to take the part of the little ones with undiscriminating vehemence, and to be much less kind to *la cadette* unless she have paired with her in that intimate manner which realizes the old similitude of "the double cherry seeming parted," and is one of the most pure and perfect affections in existence.

Nothing can form this connection—nothing but nature, and the peculiar construction of each character, either in similarity or dissimilarity; but a strong and wise hand, hindering all infractions of the peace, and teaching to bear and forbear—showing to the perpetrator that "a small unkindness is a great offence," and to the sufferer that it is a very little one—does much to smooth the future path of life, and to make home a beloved recollection. Patience and forgiveness are within the scope of a child's virtue, and should be required as the test of its sincerity.

Yet by this I do not mean that there should be a constant appeal to the highest motives as an engine for management. If you tell a child not to teaze its little brother, because if he does "God will not love him," you say what is not true. You break

the Third Commandment yourself, and you put the child in danger of doing the same, and hating the appeal. It is one that the religious poor are in the habit of using; and care must be taken in checking young nursery-maids in making it, to show you do not mean to prohibit religious subjects, only light appeals. To recall the fault at bed-time, when the temper is over, and teach the child to confess it, and ask pardon in his prayer, is an entirely different thing.

One more point in childish religion is almsgiving. If children have money of their own, the duty of reserving a tithe for charity or the Offertory should be put in their way, as an obligation. Natural compassion will do much, if properly managed; and as the happy creatures need never know of imposition, they may generally "find joy unmixed in charity." The great point is to let them feel the tithe the duty, the rest right, but not compulsory. To let little girls' school-room needlework be of garments for the poor, and if possible to let them give them in person, is an excellent plan; and if they are not allowed to choose the object, or call the gift their own, unless they have bought the material with their own money, they will generally learn to prefer such a purchase to sweets or dolls' clothes.

One great difference has come in of late. Greediness used to be viewed as a degradation, now it is made light of. Children of the last generation, especially girls at home, were led to think the purchase of sweets with their own money a thing no rational being would do, viewing the pleasure as transitory, the waste as shameful. Why is it that now it is thought unkind and strict to train children in the disdain of mere pleasures of appetite and in the spirit of self-denial, which they must need all their life?

There was something to be said for boys at the old-fashioned schools, where mere necessaries alone were provided, and the desire for variety of food was a sort of instinct; but that a child whose ordinary food comprises what is pleasant as well as wholesome, should not be dissuaded from spending money on so poor and foolish an enjoyment as sugar-plums, seems to me, I own, a strange thing. It is far better, far wiser, far happier, for

a child to eat at regular times, than to be allowed to eat whatever is before other people, only because it is in sight and looks nice. To some people it seems cruel not to give a child a spoonful out of an egg, or to let it eat the fruit it helps to gather. I can only say that I have been thankful all my life for the habits given to me of being able to see food without expecting it, and of viewing niceties in shops without thinking of buying them unnecessarily.

CHAPTER V.

HOME, SCHOOL, OR GOVERNESS.

THE ideal education for girls is that by the parents; but three things are wanting to this, namely, power, time, and will, so far as actual instruction is concerned. As to that education which is far more than actual teaching, the will is all that is needed. Let real interest be shown in the child's studies; let there be a word of teaching, a little encouragement, a quarter of an hour's reading, as often as possible, an eye for a fair exercise in writing or achievement in drawing, an ear for a recitation or a piece of music; let the children feel that every step in learning renders them more companionable to their father, and he will do more for them than is in the power of any other creature. If he be a man of leisure, he ought to do far more for them; but men of leisure are so very rare, that it is hardly worth while to speak of them.

There is an odd notion abroad, that children do not learn so well of their nearest relations as of strangers. The fact is, I suspect, that the gift of teaching is not universal, and that the person whose profession it is, ought—either from natural ability, endowment, or experience—to be better qualified than the others; besides which, there are no old habits of spoiling to be broken through. Still it is a real disadvantage that mothers

do not attempt to teach more, or at any rate to be the presiding power in their school-rooms. Where mother or elder sister possesses the power, instruction comes from no one so well, and from no one is it so permanent or valuable. In a large family, however, it is impossible that the mother, however good as an instructress, can teach constantly, or have all the children depending on her; and a clergyman's wife is liable to be continually called off to "speak to some one." Other excuses as to occupation are not always equally valid. No reasonable person would take offence at a lady not being accessible to morning calls before luncheon; and visitors in the house for more than a single day do not require entertainment in the forenoon. Even a leisurely husband, if he have any real regard for his children, will surely not grudge the mother two or three quiet morning hours with them. Depend upon it, if she will make the school-room her resort, teaching whatever she is most fit to teach, whether the hearing great girls read, or taking the little boys' Latin, or the babies' first lessons—doing whatever is her strong point or the governess's weak one; sometimes making her teaching a reward, or in other cases taking in hand the cranky one who has some essential misunderstanding with the governess—she will gain a hold over her children's minds and affections, their trust and confidence, far above what comes of only meeting in holiday hours. "The governess would not like it." Then do not keep her, but take a young one, with fresher accomplishments, and thankful for supervision.

I take it, the best education is by the parents, supplemented by technical teaching in certain branches, such as languages, music, drawing, and, if the parents be not qualified, in arithmetic; the second best, that by a good governess or elder sister, superintended by the parent; the third, a good school. A really good school is very much better than an inferior governess left to herself; but as things stand at present, it is exceedingly difficult to find a good school that is not so expensive as to be out of the reach of large families.

One difficulty is, that good tuition is so costly that it can

hardly be attained without large numbers; and it is not possible to have large numbers of young girls boarding together, without injury to qualities more essential than intellect. It is a curious thing, but of universal experience, that while most boys are improved by free intercourse with their own kind in large numbers—generally the larger the better—girls as certainly deteriorate in proportion as the sense of family life is lost.

There are reasons for it, of various kinds. One is the loss of privacy in the bed-rooms—which blunts certain delicate edges. Sisters sleep together at home; but this is only a prolongation of the nursery, and quite different from the never being out of the sight of strangers. Screens are a *sine quâ non*, but even these cannot prevent a girl's prayers, readings, and meditation, from being at the mercy of anyone possessed with the spirit of mischief or curiosity. All, however, that is to be said on this point has been excellently put in Miss Sewell's *Principles of Education*.

Next comes the disadvantage recognized not only in ladies' schools but in orphanages—that the tenderer parts of the character find no scope. Where a large mass of girls, from sixteen to ten or eight, are thrown together, the little ones are not small enough to draw out the affection of the elders. Even at home, as I said before, many an elder sister is as kind as possible to the babies, while she is harsh and impatient to the middle-sized children; and where there is no bond of relationship the younger children are, in the sight of the great ones, a troublesome noisy herd. The institution of "school mammas" may secure a protector for each, and there are occasional pets, either from exceptional smallness or other charms; but, in general, there is in the nature of things an antagonism that breeds party spirit, and takes off the softness of both parties.

And most serious of all is the fact, that when once the numbers are too large for the semblance of family life, confidence between the head and the members becomes impossible. Unless the chief can really be a mother to the pupils, and the teachers and senior girls live in free intimacy with her and the little

ones, supervision becomes *espionnage*, and confidence tale-telling. Where such terms of friendship are impossible, there is no guarding against unimaginable evils, which a sense of honour forbids the more conscientious to disclose.

Girls are more helpless than boys when they detect evil among them. The rough police by which good boys indignantly crush the mischief, while guarding the delinquent from exposure to the master, is impossible to the feminine creatures. The pleasure of eluding suspicion and discovery is part of human nature, and is no small temptation to acquiesce in acted deceits; and where once the feeling has set in that the authorities are natural enemies, there will come the spirit of evasion, and of all but flat untruth. Where there are numerous subjects too, the rules must be more strict, more numerous, and less elastic, than among a few; they will therefore be more irksome, and the temptation to break them will be proportionably greater, so that the government is more galling, and those engaged in it are naturally looked on with less liking.

The only thoroughly satisfactory sort of boarding-school for girls, seems to be one not numbering more than from ten to twenty, where the head can, without loss of dignity, be on such terms as a kind aunt or home governess would be on with the pupils; where they can be allowed to use their tongues at meals, and can spend the evening all together, sometimes with a book read aloud to them, sometimes in games; where they can have ready access to their teacher, and it can be a treat to be her companion in a walk, or to call her to join in their fun. Then there is a chance that they will really love her and one another, and that she will see enough of them unrestrainedly to understand their dispositions. Then they can be led to explain their troubles and difficulties; her desire for the good of all will be infused into the elder ones; and such as are set in any authority can, without sense of unkindness, report their perplexities or explain hers.

Such a school as this cannot be remunerative without very heavy charges, if the tuition be of a superior order. In the

country, it would be hardly possible to carry it on without resident teachers of a high class; and in a town, the rent would be so much higher as to lessen something of the advantage of having masters close at hand.

Would it not be possible to establish good day-schools, conducted by really superior teachers, to whom the girls in each town might resort from their homes, establishing in combination with them small boarding-houses, under ladies of such qualifications as would make real motherly homes of their houses, and under whose charge girls could be put, to form little families? Many a widowed mother, wanting to educate her daughter, would be thankful for such an opening; nay, the wives of professional men would be often glad to add to their incomes by thus taking in a few girls, who would often be supplied from among their country acquaintance. Different grades in social rank might probably meet at the school, but as it would be only in class, it could hardly lead to inconvenient intercourse.

However, this is a thing of speculation. As matters actually stand, I believe that if circumstances render it necessary to send a girl from home at all, the most un-school-like place is best for her; and even at the sacrifice of first-rate teaching, that it is better to place her in some family, or in a very small party of pupils, till her character has settled itself. Afterwards, a thoroughly good school, from fifteen to seventeen, or from sixteen to eighteen, will give method and instruction at an age when she is able to value and profit by them. It is the same with girls brought up either entirely on domestic teaching, or with a governess able to lay foundations, but not to pass beyond; a year or two at a good school may often be exceedingly valuable to them, if they go prepared to make use of it, and with character and habits settled.

Thorough goodness is, however, in this, as in everything else, the requisite; and there is at present much more power than used to exist of gauging the capacities of teachers for young ladies as well as for the poor. No professional teacher now, (in 1876), under five-and-twenty *ought* to be engaged for girls over

fourteen, who cannot produce a certificate from a University. Of course, such a governess requires a good salary, and to raise it would often be the truest economy. Sometimes it could be done by the union of two or three families with daughters of the same age, or sometimes by taking in a scholar to share the instruction.

Of course, among ladies who grew up before these facilities for obtaining certificates existed, there are many of the highest attainments, and inquiry should be able to discover them; but among the younger generation, proof ought to be offered and given of capacity beyond the vagueness involved in "excellent references." No one ought to undertake what she is not qualified to perform, and if not able to obtain a certificate, a young person intending to teach should either take younger children, continue her studies, or find some other occupation. Fortunately, there is much less nonsense now than formerly about losing caste; and if she cannot be a first-rate governess, she can perhaps be a certificated schoolmistress, a nurse, or enter on some of the occupations that are becoming more and more open to educated women.

It is the mediocre people, who take situations underpaid, and fill them in a half mechanical, half slovenly manner, who bring tuition into disrepute, and lower the public opinion of their class. Insolence to a governess is an old stock complaint. In real life, I never heard of it from anyone by birth and breeding a lady; the only instances I can recollect were in one case from a thoroughly vulgar employer, in the other from a servant, who was sharply rebuked, and, I think, dismissed for it. Persons with no consideration for those about them are to be found in any rank of life; but where a lady is forgetful of little pleasures or comforts for her governess, she is probably no better towards her husband, her friends, or anyone she is not afraid of. As to slights, anybody may find them anywhere, who looks for them and thinks about self.

Perhaps it would be well if the lady and the governess both better understood the situation of the latter. She is a lady

with a profession, just as much as a barrister is a gentleman with a profession. That profession is to teach the children, and supply the place of the mother when she is engaged. For this purpose, she is resident in the house; but it does not argue either slight or inferiority, if she do not partake all the gaieties of the mother and elder daughters. Her purpose is to be with her pupils at such times as the mother cannot attend to them, and thus she must share their hours. Then as to her evenings; where the family is large, or there is a continual coming and going of strangers, it is no interruption that she should be one of the circle; but if the husband and wife, and one son or daughter, or the like small numbers, are the ordinary home set, a person of really lady-like feeling would perceive it to be as much of an intrusion to come constantly among them, as she would think it if she lived in another house. Most likely, if she be a sensible person, she is glad of a little peace to read in or write her letters.

I have called a governess a lady with a profession. Let her think what that profession is, and what her place as a polished corner of the Temple. Is not the training of young maidens for their office in life a holy duty, an act of membership to the Church? Is she not allowed to chip at the shaping and beautifying of those living stones, to be built up silently? Does she feel as if the being paid neutralized it as direct work for the Church? Surely not. It rather gives it an earnestness and consistency, as making it a charge; and the hire—if devoted, as it so often is, to maintain a parent or educate a brother—is "holiness unto the Lord." The governess who teaches history and geography, and hears scales practised, with the conscientious care of one who has the fear of God before her eyes, is just as much a handmaid of the Church, as if she were a nursing or teaching Sister in a community.

Surely this estimate of her own place should help her so to place her children and their welfare first, as to have little observation to spend on the drawbacks of any family where she ought to engage herself. For, of course, I mean that a Christian

woman would not knowingly allow herself to be tempted by any advantages into a household where religion was systematically set aside or ignored. It is possible that it might be right for her to go, in a missionary spirit, or to remain, in a family where there was a careless tone; but this she could hardly venture without trustworthy counsel, and in that case she should accept the annoyances in the same spirit as she would those of a rude cottager. Generally speaking, if she avoided on principle a worldly ungodly house, she would also avoid any intentional misbehaviour or neglect towards herself. No situation is free from the need of bearing and forbearing; and a woman in a stranger household is more exposed to it than any other from the number of tiny peculiarities that jar and rub on either side.

Take the other side of the question. The mamma, persuaded reluctantly that the children need more teaching than she can bestow, obtains the governess in fear and dread. She is equally afraid of boring her husband with a stranger, and of hurting the governess's feelings, and all she can do is to make a sort of compromise, by bringing the governess into the drawing-room whenever there is any addition to the family party, or when her husband is out; but if she has a visit from a brother, sister, or very intimate friend, it is due to their comfort not to interrupt their brief intercourse with her, by bringing in on them a person who may indeed be on close terms of confidence with herself, but cannot be the same with them. It is no slight, for she would do the same by anyone with whom she was not on formal terms; and a governess of any tact, or good sense, will perceive, and accommodate herself. In the infinite varieties that exist, general rules are impossible; but it would seem the governess's wisest way never to obtrude herself without being sure that her company is desired, and in the case of visitors, to observe whether they appear so intimate as to wish for privacy, or whether the ladies of the house are glad of assistance in entertaining them. "Do as you would be done by" is the only rule in all cases.

So as to the household ways towards the governess. There is no need to be sentimental about her situation. If she be a good governess and wise woman, it is as much her profession as law or medicine are those of men. Treat her as a lady with a vocation, your equal in breeding, and your superior in certain acquirements; but do not let her indulgences interfere with her vocation, save exceptionally; and always be considerate in enabling her to see books and papers, or to take part in anything interesting. She should not feel—like Miss Thackeray's Catharine—that she is cut off from all that is bright and pleasant, and set aside from all that occupies young people of her own age.

I think that two classes of books increase the evils. There is first the "pathetic governess" style, the effect of which on the governess herself is excellently shewn in Miss Ingelow's *Studies for Stories*. And there is the children's book, which represents the governess as a wooden, unsympathetic person, and quizzes her attempts to enforce good English and good manners, and to impart information. Is it right thus to teach children naughtiness, and not to lead them to accept readily the training needful for them?

The grown-up girls in the house can do much for the governess's happiness. Often she can be made a very delightful sympathizing friend, and audience for all their experiences; and even if she be not suited to this happy *rôle*, she can be made much happier by their considerateness in bringing her flowers, books, music, &c., and telling her bits of news. The treatment she receives from the servants will often be decided by their manner towards her, and way of speaking of her. Whether the condition of governesses ever receives the change that is talked of, depends however not on employers, but on themselves; upon their efficiency, and on their self-respect—by which I by no means intend that punctilio which can be wounded at all points, but that simplicity which knows its place, and is "not easily provoked."

For my own part I much prefer English to foreign governesses.

The absence of unity in doctrine seems to me a heavy price to pay for slightly better pronunciation of the language, &c. What after all is the outward conformity of the Swiss or German Protestant? Who knows under what circumstances the children may be left to the governess's guidance, and is it not best that she should be really of their Church? Besides, if history is not to be learnt by rote, but thoughtfully, should it not be read with one whose principles and opinions are the same with ours? And another point is worthy of consideration. It is not right to condemn a whole nation, but it is notorious that the French standard of truth is very unlike the English, especially in Roman Catholics. Of course there are many excellent foreign governesses, but on the whole, it seems to me that the character has much greater chance of being formed by a fellow-countrywoman and Churchwoman.

CHAPTER VI.

LESSONS.

DURING the schoolroom years there is a necessity of being taught. The old verb, *to learn*, was transitive, and I will take leave so to use it. In childhood we are learnt—afterwards we learn.

"When will Miss Rosamond have finished her education?" says one of Miss Edgeworth's foolish ladies. "Never," is the answer.

The difference is, or ought to be, that during the time of tutelage, much must be acquired irrespective of natural taste and ability, while afterwards there is freedom to pursue whatever line is most obvious and agreeable.

In comes the question, Why do girls learn a little of everything? a smattering, as it is contemptuously called. Let it not

be a smattering, but a foundation. The philosophy of the matter seems to be this: woman is the helpmeet, and it is impossible to predict in what line her aid and sympathy may be needed; therefore it is well to give her the germs of many varieties of acquirement in readiness to be developed on occasion.

Of course there are certain demands of the present level of culture to which every girl has to be worked up alike, if she would be spared disgrace and mortification, and be on equal terms with those about her.

I suppose the *lowest* standard for a lady must include, besides reading aloud, tolerable composition of a letter, and arithmetic enough for accounts, respectably grammatical language, and correct pronunciation; command of the limbs and figure, facility in understanding French, history enough not to confound Romans with Greeks, and some fuller knowledge of that of England, with so much geography as to avoid preposterous blunders, dexterity in needlework, and general information and literature sufficient to know what people are talking about.

This is indeed a minimum. Some knowledge of music is almost always added, and less invariably the power of using a pencil; but without one or either of these, a person may pass in the crowd without being remarked for falling beneath ordinary mediocrity. The most frivolous mother knows that the most frivolous girl must learn thus much, and be up to a kind of Mangnall's Questions perception of things in general.

Of course this shallow surface ought to mean such grammatical instruction in English as to make slip-slop impossible and disgusting, and render the language and its construction real matter of interest. This is perhaps best learnt, not by the old-fashioned theme, but by accounts of something that has been read, or by translations, very carefully revised, and made into good English. N.B.—Nobody would imagine how very few people there are capable of making a good prose translation, even when the original language is perfectly understood; and early pains to make a translation good readable current English,

and yet give the spirit of the original, tend to teach a great deal of the idiom and anatomy of both languages. Correct English, neither careless, stilted, nor slangy, is becoming more and more rare; but it is a mark of real refinement of mind and cultivation. If simple in the choice of words and turn of phrases, it need never give the idea of formal precision: *e.g.* "I shall begin to write to my mother," is infinitely better than "I shall commence to write home," which is not grammatical, since *commence* ought to be followed by a noun instead of an infinitive, and *home* is not an adverb. "I shall commence my letter to my mother," is grammatical, but has a sound of affectation. To learn grammar thoroughly, and then use it, should be the training of every lady in the land; and it is rather hard to find that story-books unanimously represent insistance on it as a governess's way of making herself tiresome. Is it owing to this that the poor verbs *to lie* and *to lay* are so cruelly misused, and that there is a general misapprehension about the verb *to dare?*

People generally say that grammar is better learnt through another language than our own; and this is true to a certain extent, provided they do not mean colloquial French through a *bonne*, and German by the Ollendorf method. I say only to a certain extent, even when the second language has been really and grammatically learnt, because, though a general knowledge of grammar in the abstract is thus acquired, the idioms and peculiarities of the acquired tongue are the study, while our own are left to the light of nature, practice, and observation. It seems to me that after the first baby foundations of the parts of speech are laid, and ordinary speech and writing made correct, that one foreign grammar, no matter what, should be thoroughly taught, and then that the construction of any additional language will be easily acquired, while in the latter year or two of education, some very thorough book on English grammar should be well got up. Those provided for training-schools are generally excellent of their kind; and the practice of thorough analyzing a sentence is a very useful one. It is a good thing when grammar passes into logic; and though even the rudiments of logic

are a little beyond the schoolroom grasp of mind, a girl who has the capacity would do well to cultivate them, not so much for their own sake, as because the power of reasoning is a most important element in having a right judgment in all things.

As to other languages, French is a necessity. To speak it with perfect ease and a Parisian accent is a useful and graceful accomplishment, only to be acquired by intercourse with natives early enough in life for the organs to be flexible; but this is only exceptionally an entire matter of necessity. French after "the school of Stratford-le-Bowe" has been prevalent among educated Englishwomen ever since Chaucer's time; and a thorough grammatical knowledge, with such pronunciation as can be obtained through good lessons, is to stay-at-home people more valuable than mere ease of speech, which they only rarely have to exercise.

But if it be needful, a German *bonne* is generally kind, true, and faithful, and not likely to do harm to little children. It is the further advantage in making this pronunciation a nursery, not a schoolroom matter, that no girl reading ancient history with a foreigner has a chance of hearing the usual English pronunciation of the classical names. To me it seems that the fashion of teaching German as a matter of course is rather a pity. I had rather make Latin the schoolroom lesson, and leave German to be volunteered afterwards. German is so difficult, as to require a great deal of time; and it is so irregular, as not to be the key to nearly so much as Latin—in learning which it is quite possible to learn the great outlines of both French and Italian—at any rate, the study of both, alike in construction and words, is much simplified, since both are Latin broken in different ways. German leads to nothing (except in the case of philology) but reading its own literature; whereas Latin is needful for clear knowledge of our own tongue, and moreover gives much greater facility of comprehension and power of exactness in the terminology of every other science, from Theology downwards. Latin, and at least enough Greek to read the words and find them in the lexicon, are real powers.

With the knowledge of grammar thus acquired, German might be one of the studies taken up in the later young-lady days, though it is a pity it should now always have the preference to Italian, the language of Dante, Tasso, and Manzoni.

A woman's practical arithmetic is said to consist in keeping her accounts. But if she undertakes the care of any charity, she often needs to know book-keeping; and for useful training of the mind, apart from utilitarianism, I have great faith in arithmetic. Heads are very different; and in some few cases there would seem to be almost an incapacity for it, certainly a great aversion. Often this dislike arises from bad teaching at first, never entirely surmounted, or from being dragged on beyond the power of following. In mental arithmetic, the child of slow calculation should not be put in contact with the quick one, or it never understands at all.

It seems to me that intelligent arithmetic is sometimes attempted too soon. Some processes are really better done mechanically and by the memory than by intellectual force; and most people are capable of working a sum long before they can comprehend it. Few of us but could *do* a long-multiplication or long-division sum on occasion, but I suspect that only persons employed in teaching could instantly explain why the one becomes a flight of steps, and the other "a long ladder of figures." I doubt if the brain can take in the full idea before eleven or twelve years old, though the mechanical operation may be performed with perfect ease, "a sort of conjuring," as some inspector contemptuously says of girls' arithmetic.

Let it be conjuring then at first, only do not give very long difficult sums to be done without assistance. The strain of attention is too great and too long, and the toil caused by a blunder disheartening. Shorter "problems," *always proved*, teach a great deal more, with much less disgust. Proof should be required, for establishing that the correctness of the answer does not depend upon the caprice of the key, but is really a fact and cannot be otherwise. It shows how and why a blunder in the working affects the result, and assists in understanding the

principle; moreover, it assists in preventing one rule from being forgotten while another is being mastered. I believe we do not really know anything till it becomes the means of learning something else. Our last acquisition may always fly away till it has been rammed down with something above it; and thus the past rule is best secured by becoming the means of learning the new one.

Mechanical arithmetic extends, we should say, as far as Practice, and ought to be worked well through by eleven or twelve years old. It is best to go through all the varieties of weights and measures, not for the sake of learning how to work them, but of fixing them in the memory, and using them does this far better than learning them by heart. There are exceptional beings, who like Mrs. Mozley's Bessie Gray, learn arithmetic with their understanding, and cannot get on without appreciating the reason why; but these are not common. Nature makes the childish brain willing to take an immense deal of rote work rather than use one effort to think; and we believe she is right. It is thinking, not learning nor working, that damages; and the memory may be stored, and facility of working can be obtained, without that dangerous feat of comprehension and deduction which is what "pressing a child too much" really means.

Between ten and thirteen, according to their powers, girls should *begin at the beginning* of some easy book of scientific arithmetic. De Morgan's is a very good one. They should read it aloud with a thorough-going person, who will not let them leap over the self-evident foundations that they will view as insults to their understanding. The real meaning of the working of the first four rules, there mastered, leads on the vulgar fractions, proportion, and decimals; and only the minds which are more than commonly blind to calculation can help comprehending and being interested.

Somewhere about this time a beginning of mathematics should be made. Long previously the primary terms should have been accurately understood. Reading, or geography, in fact, must

lead to the learning the difference between an angle and a triangle, about parallels, rectangles, and the like. N.B.—If the teacher happens to find her own head in confusion on the subject, she had better look the definitions up at the beginning of the books of Euclid. Nobody can teach properly or understand accurately, who alternately talks of a hexagon and a sexagon, or who does not perceive that an angle of ninety degrees must be a right angle. There are things which a person of moderate capacity can gather while reading, but that cannot be *taught* without being learnt instead of picked up. It is absolute amusement to children to be taught to use a case of instruments, and the names and something of the natures of the simpler mathematical figures; and the manner of drawing them can be taught them as part of that rational occupation which is the next thing to play. Even girls' patch-work can be the foundation of a good deal of real experimental information, if it be drawn on a symmetrical design, requiring as it does perfect exactness.

But it is well towards the end of the schoolroom course to study the earlier books of Euclid, more perhaps for the sake of the reasoning than of the knowledge. Observe, this is not to be enforced upon beings devoid of all mathematical capacity, of whom both sexes possess some specimens of average intellect in other respects. These, if hard driven, will learn the propositions by a feat of memory, but never comprehend a word of them. They must be given up, just as the earless are given up as to music.

The discipline of mathematics is, however, very valuable to the feminine creature in itself, and it is the key to a great deal more, above all when the point is reached where the properties of plane figures begin to meet and explain the operations of arithmetic. I remember to this hour the delight of finding the meaning of the working of a square-root sum. It is an immense stage in life to rise, even for a moment, above the rule of thumb.

Algebra and the further study of geometry are very good to be carried on beyond the schoolroom. Indeed, those who have

capacity and opportunity, and who have gone through arithmetic, perhaps as far as the cube root, by the last year of their schoolroom life, had better be then initiated into algebra, for the sake of simplifying the operations they are learning to understand, and for the benefit that the comprehension of the symbols will be in every other study.

But we may hardly repeat too often, the schoolroom is the place for learning beginnings. Afterwards the pursuit of the study depends upon taste and circumstance. Nobody is obliged to know more arithmetic than enough to keep the accounts, but those who have the capacity will do well by themselves if they carry on the study; and not only by themselves, for who can tell what opportunities of assisting brother, father, husband, or son, this cultivated power may not give them; nay, in the lowest and most utilitarian view the same instruction that enables them to appreciate the vast theories of astronomy serves to reckon the quantity of carpeting needed for a room.

So again, a moderate knowledge of history is *de rigueur;* but there are persons so constituted that they can take no interest in the past. Neither the great changes which deal with the welfare of nations, the striking characters, nor the romantic incidents, have power to touch them; they cannot project their imagination into bygone days, nor care about that which is not in immediate action. These must go through historical study enough not to be liable to absurd blunders; and intelligent teaching would probably make it much more interesting to them, by showing the bearing upon the present.

History should be taught from the first moment that reading has become not so much an art as a stepping-stone. The names and dates of English kings are, to the rest of history, much what the multiplication table is to arithmetic, and so the succession and some idea connected with each name should be got into the head as soon as possible; and many of the old traditions are just as necessary to be known as if they were arithmetic. King Alfred and the cakes, Knut and the tide, the Conqueror and the

curfew, Rufus and the arrow—all are connections that *can* be established in the first lustre, and serve as foundations for life. Some wise man recommended teaching history backwards, beginning with the Reform Bill. I wonder whether he ever tried it upon children, or reasoned only from men, to whom elections are realities, and who may need to be shown the why and wherefore.

The childish mind can take in small personal details, but nothing of large interests; and the best way to give the framework upon which the structure of real knowledge is to be built, is to connect the name with an idea that can be grasped, and that gives a sense of amusement. If *Little Arthur's History* were not so flagrantly incorrect, it would answer the purpose; but I have felt the need of another so much as to write *Aunt Charlotte's Stories of the History of England.* (Marcus Ward.) On this the names and dates can be grafted, and should be rehearsed often enough to make them always within call by the memory in after life. There is generally connection enough with France to make the name of the king of one country recall that of his contemporary, and almost all the other continental powers were in like manner connected with France, so that a certain knowledge of English dates enables those of the rest of modern history to be perceived with sufficient accuracy for common purposes, though not for an examination.

This course of easy English history should begin as soon as the art of reading has been attained with facility enough to allow of story-books being laid aside as lessons—a time varying from five to eight, according to the mechanical reading powers of the child or the abilities of the teacher in imparting what is really the most difficult though the earliest acquisition of our lives, the linking sounds to signs. If the child cannot read well enough, the names and stories should be told or read to it in association with pictures. Anyway this alphabet should be acquired by seven or eight years old, and kept up by rehearsals of dates or writing out when another book is taken in hand.

This book had better be some outline of ancient history.

There is sufficient analogy between the childhood of individuals and the childhood of nations, to make early history, when motives are simple, and passions on the surface, much more easy to enter into than the later complications of politics. Moreover, at seven, eight, or nine, the mind is developed enough to acquire that which is perhaps one of the great distinctions between the cultivated and uncultivated—some sense of the perspective of history. And there is, or ought to be, sufficient knowledge of Scripture events to serve as some amount of scaffolding. If the child comes to this point *young*, Maria Hack's *True Stories from Ancient History* or *Aunt Charlotte's Grecian and Roman History* serve very well to give a warm interest in individuals; or for a somewhat more advanced child, *Landmarks of Ancient History* connect the "five empires" with the Bible narrative.

This will last about a year, by which time the mind will be grown enough for a somewhat more detailed English history, either the "Kings of England" or the "New School History of England" (Parker)—the ancient history being meantime kept up, as the English before, by repetition of dates. That admirable chart, Stork's "Stream of Time," ought to be in every school-room, if only it were adapted to modern discoveries and brought down to the present time. It teaches by the eye

> "How changing empires wane and wax,
> Are founded, flourish, and decay,"

more plainly than almost any amount of study or of oral instruction, and it is preferable to Le Sage's tables (which also need renewing and modernizing), inasmuch as they are shut up in a book, and this hangs, or should hang, on the wall. Who that has loitered near it can forget the streams of ancient realms falling into the Macedonian Empire, and in one generation, breaking forth from it again only to fatten the Roman Empire, which soon after its plethora begins to wax lean and emit the more modern nations? Who can forget this, who has seen it with

their eyes, and referred to it with their reading? N.B.—Historical reading should always be accompanied by maps.

Looking out the places is one of the works most wearying to human indolence, but which best rewards itself in the clearness and interest it gives; and as children like anything that breaks the continuity of a lesson, they are sure to be pleased by it. Maps are so cheap now that they can be had in sufficient numbers to provide each child with one, and if intelligently used, *i.e.* pointing to the shape of the harbour, the proximity of a mountain, or the river whose passage caused the battle, they obtain life and animation.

After the more detailed English history course, it may be well to go back to ancient history with Miss Sewell's admirable "Greece" and "Rome." Mythology is so entertaining, that it can be pretty well imparted by a discreet use of Kingsley's and Cox's tales, which are just what might be read aloud to little girls at needlework; and then might follow a translation of Homer, which hardly ever fails to interest and delight much younger than some would suppose. Translations of the Greek tragedians can carry on the course. The Æneid, if girls learn Latin, should be reserved to be read in the original.

After this ancient course, I believe my own *Landmarks of the Middle Ages and of Modern History* will answer best for sketching European history. And good historical novels and poetry had better be used to illustrate them, being either read aloud while the girls work or draw, or put into their hands as a favour. Many of G. P. R. James's novels may be very well applied to this purpose. They by no means deserve the contempt that has been bestowed on them; their romance is always pure and high-minded, and the characters and manners are carefully studied. The faults—namely, want of variety, and lack of power to rise to the highest class of portraiture—do not *tell* in this kind of reading; and where there is a hiatus in the course of Scott, the "two travellers" will be found very valuable.

Shakespeare's historical plays should of course be read in

their places, ancient and modern; and Scott's poems in the same manner.

The course of history described above will probably last till the girl is thirteen or fourteen years old; and then, if she be intelligent and capable, I would entreat that her further historical reading should be of some *real* book, not an abridgment or compilation. *Tales of a Grandfather* I should reckon as real reading; and if the child be not advanced or studious enough to read them for herself, it would be better to make them the reading lesson. There are historical errors here and there, but these can be corrected; and the contact with a really powerful thinking mind is so important a part of education, that it ought not to be sacrificed to the mere fact-cramming. The skeleton of chronology once learnt, and the power of easy writing attained, the facts can be kept up and put in by other means; but after twelve years old, history should be read aloud from authors of real force and style.

If French be by this time familiar, French history had better be read through that medium, and stories be dropped into reading for amusement, or only used occasionally as a treat on semi-holidays after the language is once mastered. Historical reading ought to be the habit of many years, so that there is much more advantage in giving the impulse to read a long book without alarm, than in galloping through any form of history made easy. The custom of hunting down a subject by its date in as full or as original a history as lies within reach, should also be taught about this time; and this can often be done by proposing a subject—say the account of some battle, or siege, or some biography, and awarding the meed of honour to the fullest and most accurate composition.

CHAPTER VII.

CULTURE.

After all, the true way to make lessons interesting, is to let the young people fall naturally in the way of cultivated conversation. When "George Eliot" shows Mrs. Holt curtseying to the cast of a satyr, under the impression that he was an eccentric ancestor of the family, she shows that vast difference in culture which renders instruction so very shallow in those who do not belong to families where matters of art or literature come into daily life. Anyone who has tried to teach poor children history or geography perceives this. They can apprehend the facts with as much intelligence as their contemporaries of higher rank, but they forget them instantly, because there is nothing connected with them in their daily life, and no one at home would care to hear of them; and this indifference prevails a good way above poverty. If the parents and the society care for cultivation, nothing is so good for the intelligence of their growing girls as to be allowed to hear interesting conversation, not necessarily joining in it, but being taught to think it a privilege to sit and listen, and being summarily prevented from chattering among themselves. This, by the by, when begun as a school-girl habit, adheres for life, and becomes a nuisance, with the best intentions. Some of the best and kindest ladies in the world imagine that a person sitting silent must feel neglected, and will rush across to occupy, with some improvised commonplace, the ears that were eagerly listening to an interesting discussion. These are generally either people who have been secluded in the schoolroom all their girlhood, or else who have belonged to large families, and been accustomed to keep up an undercurrent of whispers, while their parents and their guests were talking. Those who have never lived out of the schoolroom, nor shared their parents' interests, but have depended for conversation on

a governess, who herself has no range beyond theirs, are often marvellously ignorant of common things and the ways of ordinary life, not so much for want of having learnt them, or read them, as for want of seeing them put into practice.

Story-books are very apt, unkindly and mischievously, to describe the governess as making herself disagreeable, by continually calling the children to order for their slip-slop speech, and by administering bits of information in the driest manner. Now if there is to be the culture of scenery and association in our lives, surely it is better to represent it as pleasant, instead of oppressive, to be shown the curiosities and taught the history of our cathedrals and ruins; and a person is hardly to be called properly educated who is bored by the real peculiarities of the sights she sees. Who does not know the difference between showing a lion to an appreciative observer, and to one to whom it is only gape-seed and an excuse for an expedition? And this power of intelligent observation can best be cultivated in children by heedful attention; not tormenting or oppressing the holiday, but encouraging and following up the observations they are quite willing to make for themselves, though generally not at the time nor in the way their elders would cut out for them. Be content to accept their lead, and you can make a great deal of them—even though in the very midst they may turn into fairies, or anything else that is wholly irrelevant and frivolous. "How to see sights" is no inconsiderable part of education.

There are two classes of intelligent seers—one whose bent is to what, for want of a better name, may be called the romantic; the other, to the scientific. Sometimes these meet in the same person, but not very often. The same, whether young or old, who is excited about the baron who defended the ruined castle, or the monk who built the abbey, will probably be uninterested in the curve of the arch that has defied time, or the plants that wave on the battlements; but provided there is some real notion carried away, what it is must be left to character. Such a habit is important, not only for the actual information derived (in

itself a thing of small importance), but because intelligent pursuits are among the minor distractions of grief or suffering, and no small aids in bearing up through many of the troubles of life. A clever German governess has lately said that English girls are stupefied by learning the alphabet of everything—music without concerts, drawing without pictures, history without museums, botany without flowers, &c. This need surely never be with those in London, who can have easy access to every treasure of history or art; and in the country, true culture should make them thoroughly know the detailed history of each curiosity around, of town and down, church and ruin, and all that can awaken intelligent interest.'

Some good clear book on matters of natural science ought at some time to be read with the children, to prevent flagrant ignorance. *Pictures of the Heavens*, or some other easy astronomical treatise, supplemented by the pointing out of the constellations at night by the help of a celestial globe or Mr. Proctor's star maps, will spare the horrible blunders to be seen even in print—such as Mercury being detected near the top of the church tower in the middle of the night, new moons shining at midnight, or full ones coming twice in a month. And what is far more important, there is no study that so stretches the mind to the conception of Infinite Majesty. Wilson's *Five Gateways of Knowledge* and Mace's *Morceau de Pain*, translated by Mrs. Gatty, open the way to what it is expedient to know about our own bodies. Some sensible little book on botany should also be read, *not* one on the Linnæan system, as this only gives much machinery to be discarded; and some other on geology. I refrain from names, because these sciences are in a state of growth, which makes their rudiments change. If the child have a taste for any of these, it will be sure to pursue them; and the natural love of collecting may stimulate the latter. Botany and palæontology have this great merit, that collections involve no slaughter or cruelty. My own feeling is strong that girls at least should be taught to feel life too sacred, even in a butterfly, to be sacrificed to their childish love

of collecting. The strange delight of killing grows by gratification, and children get pitiless to the insect if once slaughter is permitted. Of course man's right over creation permits the killing of animals for use; and a scientific collection made when there is sense, capacity, and power to inflict death painlessly, is perfectly justifiable; but a child under fourteen or fifteen is not old enough to prove whether the desire to collect be merely imitation, or greed of possession. I have known a family where caterpillars were nursed into chrysalides, and drawings taken of them in every stage, after which the butterfly was released. The collection so made is far more valuable and less perishable than if it had been of impaled butterflies. This mode of collecting should be cherished and assisted; but, in girls at least, the other should be stopped to the utmost; and with boys there should be strong restrictions against wanton destruction and needless cruelty, even if it be found impossible to prevent what they see others do. But the feminine creature should shrink from causing death for her pleasure.

Natural Science must in its first laws be taught, but in the detail never forced on children, or they get a distaste for it. To be teased with botany in walks leads to a dislike to it, though, if the child have a turn that way, she will be grateful for any wonder shown to her in the flower she gathers.

Next come accomplishments. Of music I can say, because I know, little or nothing; but I believe the rudiments should be well taught, whether taste or ear exist or not. Afterwards, if talent be lacking, it is waste of time and money to insist on a girl's playing. And if she have the power, surely correct practice of real classical pieces, and study of the science, ought to come before the desire to amuse drawing-room guests with the *newest* thing. Thoroughness in music, as in everything else, is required, and all the more because it is often the readiest means by which a lady can assist in Divine Service. Her music is worth something when she consecrates it by playing the instrument or training the choir. Nor is it without its

blessed use when it refreshes her wearied father, or attracts her brothers to a safe and happy amusement, softening and elevating. The power of giving voice to praise is so precious, that it should ennoble the whole study, and be its prime object. The playing or singing to a party should be viewed as merely an accidental mode of giving pleasure. Opportunities of letting girls hear good music should be secured as the best way of showing them the meaning of what they learn, and giving them a real standard above mediocrity.

It is not so hard to learn to draw properly as it used to be now that few large towns are devoid of schools of art. It ought to be a universal art to be able to draw a straight line, to shade, and to produce a correct copy of an object. This is merely learning to see. Without some such training, the eye has no appreciation of what is before it, and unless naturally gifted, does not know how to look at a landscape or picture. This power of looking is much more important than the manual power of producing a drawing. That is to many an exquisite pleasure, but not to all alike; and those who do not care for it need not pursue the study further than is practically needed. Those who have a talent or taste will do wisely to work either at a school of art, or from models and simple copies. The old-fashioned girls'-school drawing-master is happily nearly extinct. He was apt to be rather worse than no teaching at all. The wisest way for those out of reach of instruction is to get some good simple manual, such as Marcus Ward's series of copies, and work as exactly as they can; and as in common life as well as in greater things, "to him that hath shall be given," good instruction is likely to be attained by some chance that the diligent learner will thus be in a condition to profit by.

Intelligent knowledge of art is a part of culture given indescribably. Miss Owen's *Christian Art*, and if possible Mrs. Jameson's beautiful books, give much help in getting art-knowledge. Londoners have opportunities in the public galleries; and when girls visit town, pains should be taken that they really see the National Gallery. The sight of the Royal Academy is

an infinitely less useful achievement, and however desirable to their elders as food for conversation, can in the nature of things be only bewildering instead of instructive to unformed tastes. The National Gallery well gone through, and *not* treated as gape-seed, is a key to volumes of art, and opens the mind to a sense of real beauty and greatness. Photographs are bringing the general form and distribution of the greater pictures home to almost every one, and it is well to encourage collections of them; but the children should be taught to discriminate between real beauty and mere sentimental prettiness, such as will be apt to take their fancy; and if there are good books of reference within their reach, they should hunt up the subjects and the histories of the artists, and by this means they may acquire a very tolerable knowledge of art.

Many children will produce exceedingly clever drawings when very young, but lose their taste for it when the drudgery of regular learning sets in. It is a curious thing that an exceedingly bad drawing (technically) will often be full of spirit and expression, which it is impossible to repeat, even by the most complete transcript, which only gives the faults without the character. The lesson generally drives away this fire. The child who has carried out its idea of countenance or gesture with fashions of its own, is disgusted to be set to draw a box or an egg; and when next it betakes itself to the delineation of a battle or a beauty, it finds its newly-acquired knowledge of the rules of drawing hamper its power of expression. Unless duty and perseverance be strong, it "does not care for drawing any longer." Then it is well that the work should be compulsory, long enough to bear the pupil over the practical difficulties; and then, if genius be really in him, it will come back, and the correct execution will be inspired by it. "*Cette vilaine bête est vivante et la mienne est morte,*" will often be true of the works of untaught talent and uninspired skill; but let talent never imagine that, in these days at least, fire and expression can be preserved without accuracy of drawing. It is a matter of conscience to be *true* and painstaking in every point of a performance. And thus it is that the most

conscientiously diligent children are often the least enterprising. They have an indolence of will that shrinks from the trouble they know anything new will cost them; and so they hang back, while the slighter workers are ever beginning with zeal and not considering the end. Nothing needs to be more carefully impressed than this perseverance. Either in an Annual, or the *Contributions of Q.Q.*, I remember a contrast between the little girl who did a few things thoroughly and one who undertook many and completed none. To the one, a few perfectly finished gifts were awarded; the other, many more, but all useless because deficient in some member. Each was to be repaired as she finished.

Perhaps the conscience of thoroughness is the most important intellectual acquisition of early education.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHILDREN'S PLEASURES.

In a happy, well-ordered, affectionate home, child life is full of pleasure.

> "Whatever joys to-day may shine,
> Whate'er may touch with sorrow,
> Yet it will be, I will divine,
> A something else to-morrow;
> Such trifles will their hearts employ—
> A shell, a flower, a feather;
> If none of these, a cup of joy
> It is to be together."

"Treats" are, however, a great element in the joy of childhood. The having something to look forward to is a real ingredient in happiness, and to be without it is often depressing.

But the treat should be sufficiently infrequent to be a real subject of anticipation. It should be something not commonplace, and then it is indeed a treat and a stimulus if rightly used.

And the wholesomest treats are those where the gratification is entirely apart from display or vanity. Perhaps the most truly delightful is the excursion to wood or ruin, or any other place which is an excuse for the out-of-doors dinner or tea, and for running about, scrambling, and flower-gathering. A little gathering of young friends enjoy this to perfection; and it is no occasion for smart frocks, nor for food with any zest save hunger and quaint contrivance. Even the London child in these railway days can enjoy such an expedition from town, and most probably will be in the country for a few weeks at least. These are delights to all ages, from the very first where there is strength enough for the long day, without being a drag on the other children.

The school tea is another cause of exceeding happiness, especially when the school-children are the real object, not the excuse, and their games are promoted and joined in by the gentle children. Then there is all the delight of usefulness and importance and real kindness. Fingers sticky with distributing buns, frocks splashed or even inundated with tea poured from cumbrous pitchers into tiny mugs held aslant—these are natural incidents of the day, only requiring that the frocks should "wash;" so that there need be no distress on their account, even though the gathers should come out at blind-man's-buff or Tom Tiddler's ground.

No, let it be no best-frock garden party in disguise, with croquet-grounds to amuse idle spectators, who have no business there. Have only those who come to wait on the school-children, and do not insult childhood, gentle or simple, by making its supposed pleasure a means of paying off your own social debts.

The garden party is the best form of child's party, though, to my mind it is spoilt for them as soon as it passes into full dress, or includes large numbers who are not intimate. Children may think it will be a pleasure, but they are no judges beforehand, and they cannot be taken to such an entertainment among numerous elders without being either troublesome and

forward, or else under a restraint and *gêné* only rendered endurable by the pleasures of dress, eating, and aping grown-up manners. And if this is so with a garden-party, which at least has the merit of being in the open air and by daylight, what can be said for the Christmas-tree system?

The original German Christmas-tree, be it understood, I think a charming custom, when it is the real family celebration, and there is "love seed" in every one of the parcels, which everybody directs to everybody with delightful transparent mystery and secrecy. Such trees deserve to grow in every household, and all the better for bearing fruit for the lonely neighbour, the servants and dependants, children, the poor and the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Or to re-deck the tree with fresh contrivances for some Sunday class, some workhouse children, or the like, will make it a double fount of light and joy.

But the frequent process is—"I suppose we must have a Christmas-tree. People will expect it. It is an intolerable trouble and expense; but if it is done at all, it must be handsomely done."

So cart-loads of *bon-bons* are purchased in frail glittering tinsel contrivances, and a great outlay is grudgingly made on articles to be distributed at hap-hazard, not out of love or regard, or adaptation to the children, but simply that the thing may be done handsomely.

The children stand round. They do not care for the giver, they have no gratitude for the gift, they are merely eager for what they can get, and they are loaded with *bon-bons* in such quantities, that their best wishers are thankful if half are lost or crushed. Then comes the formal dancing, with all the flirtations and follies of grown-up people aped in it; and at a preposterous hour the supper, as elaborate and costly as a regular ball supper, and more freely criticised by the precocious little epicures.

Can this be wholesome for body and mind? Will not parents have strength and unworldliness enough to be thought

"particular," and save their children from such a hot-bed of all that no one could wish to see in them?

Hannah More, long ago, pleaded against children's balls. She was set up in effigy, with a great rod in her hand, at the end of a ballroom in London, in consequence; but her religious remonstrance, followed up by Miss Edgeworth's common-sense one, really did make childish dissipation much less the fashion for the time. Careful parents made their children happy at home, or in the small numbers where they could be freely happy over their play in an innocent, inexpensive manner, such as left them children. But it is publicity and large numbers that spoil everything with us. Acting—a delightful holiday sport—is made a dangerous cause of display and titillation of vanity to every clever or pretty child. As soon as the play gets beyond the intimate friends, and becomes the *motif* of a miscellaneous party, including all the visiting list, the poor children, who ought to be playing for their own and their family's wholesome diversion, receive half their stimulus from the desire of obtaining admiration.

"Oh! they are so simple, such dear little things, they never think about it."

Easy to say; but does anyone know a child's thoughts, and can it be right to put them into temptation?

People will answer that it does not do much harm; also, that they cannot offend inviting friends, or seem to the children to deprive them of enjoyment.

As to the friends, they will be content to speak of such parents as very "particular;" and for the children the old trust, that "Papa and Mamma know best," may be reinforced by representations of the weariness and stiffness, as well as the real temptations of the evenings; and if a real genuine home delight, shared by their own little friends, or bestowed on the poor by their hands, be provided for them, they will have no need to complain. Or if a child should wish and murmur either infected by some playfellow, or admiring the unknown, never mind. She will thank her parents for their wisdom in time.

The pantomime may be one of these compensating treats for a London child at Christmas, though to my mind the beauty of the scenery is much marred by the burlesque words, ruining all the grace and poetry, and pandering to the vulgar popular taste for puns and stock allusions. If there were but a pantomime with the fairy world brought to life, with simple straightforward poetry and grace, that would be the place for children; but of that we fear there is no chance.

Sight-seeing is a very important "treat." Only it should not begin too young. A child dragged to sights it cannot yet care for, half frightened and wholly wearied, is a sad sight. Some children really experience a shock to the nerves when taken too young to the Zoological Gardens; and any way it is wasting a great pleasure to take them there before their curiosity has been excited by having heard or read something about the animals. I was seven or eight years old before any came in my way, and to this hour I remember vividly even the aspect and arrangement of the dens in which I saw them.

To learn to look intelligently, as I said in the last chapter, is a great part of education. Who does not know the difference between the spectator who examines, learns, and enjoys, and the spectator who gazes vacantly, makes some silly jest, or some preposterous remark that becomes a byword?

To take children to the British Museum, when their studies point to any division of the many subjects there contained, would at once vivify their lessons, teach them how to see, and give much pleasure. From ancient history to the Egyptian Hall one day, to the Nineveh slabs soon after; from Grecian history to the Mausoleum and the Elgin marbles; from the Punic Wars to the Carthaginian pavements; or again, from English history to the Tower and Westminster Abbey. How easy to do this as a reward for diligence; how the expedition would be enjoyed; how much it would tell in vividness of interest!

Yet, are not the Tower and Museum viewed as only pasture for the greenest country cousins, while the most trumpery ephemeral exhibition has its multitudes of visitors?

Two or three chapters in Edgeworth's *Early Lessons*, as well as some in *Harry and Lucy*, show the keen enjoyment children can, with a little care, be made to take in museums, or any other exhibitions; and also how soon the attention becomes fatigued. Nothing is better here than Miss Edgeworth's continual protest against vacancy, listlessness, and spurious excitements or display.

Excitement is close at hand with almost all children. The hope of the least pleasure agitates them; and if the world would only leave them to the simplest, freest, most inexpensive pleasures, they would be much happier, as well as much better able to enjoy in after years.

But, alas! who would imagine that in their name the pomps and vanity of this world had ever been renounced?

A word or two further I should like to say of home every-day pleasures. The toy question belongs properly to a younger period, and most educational manuals speak very sensibly about them, though the truth is, that only experience really teaches parents what is the best way of managing the toy question. Only when the eldest hope has bitten to pieces, spoilt, or disregarded a certain amount of expensive toys, do people really believe that plain articles, capable of rough ill-usage, are the real promoters of pleasure. And it is a matter of family experience whether fur is a delightful "pussy," or gives a horrible sensation.

The Edgeworth remarks about mechanical and useful toys being preferable, only fail in one respect, namely, their want of poetry, and failure to perceive the way in which toys deal with the imaginative, the tender, and the æsthetic sides of children's minds, as well as the intelligent and mechanical ones. Miss Edgeworth, and still less her father, would never have understood Mrs. Gatty's touching memory of "rabbits' tails," nor the "woolly lambs standing on four pins," which a writer in *The Magazine for the Young* speaks of as having been bought of a poor hawker, to "babble of green fields," as the perfectly formed lamb, which Mr. Ruskin recommends, never could or

would have done, since the mere symbol is almost a needful provocative of imagination, as all theatrical literature proves.

Nobody, however, can *give* imagination, and the child must have what suits its genuine taste best. The child who loves the ornament or picture for its little room, whether for beauty or suggestiveness, is to be as much encouraged as the lover of the useful or mechanical article.

Encouraged, I say, but directed; for the purchase of things merely because they come before the eye and are "pretty," is to be decidedly discouraged, though the taste for the beautiful, noble, and suggestive, should be encouraged. Buying for buying's sake, as well as tawdry trumpery, should be laughed at and proscribed, and the consideration, "Will it last?" "Is this only for the pleasure of spending money?" be enforced. "What will you do with it?" "Shall you get tired of it?" "Do you really need it?" all should be carefully asked, even while leaving the child a free agent. And when a bit of experience has been purchased, it had better not be forgotten; for the habit of trifling away money is one of the hardest to cure.

Dolls are very different institutions in different families. To some girls they are children, to others sisters; while to others they are mere milliners' blocks, and to another set mere despised badges of feminine inferiority. In general, however, the notion that little girls learn needlework by dressing them is a mere delusion. To make their clothes handily requires much more neatness than to make those of a poor child; and shops and bazaars do all they can to remove the incentive, by offering every imaginable equipment ready made.

The real use and delight of a doll is, however, such as is shown in Mrs. O'Reilly's charming *Doll Land*, where the baby-house is a real dreamland, and the puppets therein are the subjects of absolute affection, and have individuality of character. People devoid of the peculiar imagination that can live in these fancies, will not credit them; but "they are born, they are not made," and all we are inclined to say about them is, that elders should not arbitrarily interfere with them, insist on the giving

away of the cherished doll, or the resignation of the whole doll system, for there is no knowing what real pain and grief is inflicted.

Just so with books. No one knows what fibres of the heart may have twisted round some dilapidated nursery book, and how painfully the wrench of parting with it may be remembered in after life.

Every generation complains that the one beneath it is saturated with story-books, and does not value them as of old. It is hardly true; for multitudinous as the books are, children only value and love what assimilates itself to their minds. The disadvantage of the multitude is, that a sluggish or frivolous minded child reads nothing else, and keeps down to their level. It is a real lowering of the faculties to confine a child to books of fiction, history, and science, written *down* to it. It fails to learn the meaning of language, and finds "grown-up books" difficult and incomprehensible, even when outgrowing childhood, and sinks down upon the novel, because the powers have never trained themselves to attend to anything that stretches them.

Careful parents once made it a rule to let their daughters read nothing they had not read themselves. Nothing could be wiser; for not only was the quantity diminished, but moreover, much was weeded out that, though not exactly harmful, was undesirable.

The rule is even more expedient now, for the foolish notion that didactic stories must be dull has made people absolutely proud of themselves for writing a perfectly unmeaning story, or one that exalts naughtiness into a sort of heroism, and represents the authorities as tedious, hateful inflictions.

The stories that should be avoided are, firstly, those that most improperly and mischievously depreciate governesses and make them bores, and that represent aunts and uncles as uniformly unjust and cruel to orphan wards. The cruel stepmother is gone out, the unjust aunt is come in her stead. The writers of such stories, in the wish to be pathetic, thoughtlessly add fresh stings of terror to orphanhood.

Next, I object to the conclusion to which these orphans generally tend, namely that of the novel. The protecting cousin almost always turns into the lover; and even if the cousin do not appear, the most amiable lad of the *dramatis personæ* is sure to marry the heroine at last. Now infantine attachments now and then ripen, but they ought never to be shown to children. It *can* only tend to do harm, and that to the weaker and more passive party, namely the girl, who may dream over the possibility, while the boy treats it all as "bosh."

Another stamp of book to be avoided is the *weak* religious tale. Most varieties of religious publishers pour forth stories and tiny tracts that do not so much teach religion as party distinctions. They are generally written with the best intentions, by people whose minds are too small to perceive the difference, and who deal in the little child who goes about asking people whether they are Christians, or else in the equally unnatural one who is always talking about its white robes. Both alike die young, and are equally unreal and unpractical. Most girls have a fit of imagining such children, and unfortunately too many get them stitched up into pink and blue covers, and sent forth as supposed good books, only to serve as trash, instead of bread, for Sunday-school children, and to sicklify and sentimentalise good girls; while they are the derision of all the stronger minded. The religious tale, above all, needs to be in the best—not the worst—of writing; and the same applies to the allegory. Very few are really good, and have any point; the others are mere dilutions of what ought to be taken as near the genuine article as possible. It is not so sudden a transition as it seems, to apply the same rule to fairy tales; for a good fairy tale is often an allegory, or an old myth, once allegorical.

For this class, the genuine old myth-like *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella*, *Puss in Boots*, and the like, I have the deep respect befitting a classic; but I have none at all for the arbitrary modern fairy tale, now so much the fashion. Fairies have a genuine classical genealogy, and to disturb that is really a pity. Besides, too much of impossible unreality tends to

produce a morbid craving for excitement, and a taste capable only of novel-reading.

Burlesque and caricature, and above all, slang literature, are in the same way unfit for children; and the love of exciting adventure may likewise grow exaggerated.

There are, in fact, two classes of tastes in fiction—that for character, and that for adventure. Character-loving girls sometimes get self-conscious, and learn to look at themselves as if they were sitting for their portraits in a story; and the adventure-lovers fall into the condition of Leech's Master Jacky, when "he has read all the books in the house," no author being approved but Mayne Reid!

Perhaps a very slow child, that can hardly be got to read at all, or a very mercurial being who will never sit still, must be bribed by unlimited choice of whatever is innocent and free from vulgarity, for the sake of public peace; but the ordinarily intelligent child, with a healthy appetite for books, had better be led towards the desirable ones, and saved from frivolity. An over-tasked girl, who is doing lessons to the full powers of her mind, cannot be expected to repose upon anything but story-books; but she would have more training for the future if she were obliged as a necessity to do less, and encouraged to read something improving in part of her leisure time. She will cease to do lessons, but she ought never to cease from rational reading.

It is a good plan to make the amusing book, especially when it is anything extra, conditional upon the previous reading of something solid, whether history or science. My allowance was a chapter of Goldsmith's *Rome*, to a chapter of Walter Scott, each day.

And I believe it is the wisest way to let there be a free run of Scott, Shakespeare, Spenser, and any other really sound English classic, in which I do not include modern novels, nor the Dickens school. The real romance does not do the harm that the baby novel does; the taste is formed, familiarity with noble and elevating ideas and beautiful language achieved, and

the undesirable passages are far less perceived than they are later in life. The child knows there are things it cannot understand, and passes them by, only accepting what it likes. Freedom to take down and use the real library books has been, we always find in biography, a valuable part of the education of every mind that has come to any real power. The cramping into childish fictions till seventeen, and then sudden freedom to read sensation novels, has not been found to conduce to purity of taste or poetry of mind.

The enthusiasm and romance of chivalry are congenial to the young life. Do not spoil it and tie it down, or you will only get sensationalism instead of romance; and the rude slang-like tone, which is supposed to mask feeling and deride sentiment, becomes little short of brutality and levity. There is far too little chivalry, and too much *grossièreté*, in the present fashion. May the latter never be encouraged in our children! For *it is* encouraged by talking slang, with exaggerated violent expressions, and stock phrases, and making jokes of what is no subject of merriment.

The other pleasures of girls are either out-of-door exercise, or the little pursuits of after years beginning already. Pets are good for them, *if*—and a great "if" it is—they can be properly attended to, and are safe from neglect; *not* otherwise.

Needlework is, to almost all girls at this age, a needful task. To only a few is it a pleasure, and these generally have a sort of mania for fancy-work, upon which the great experience generally needs to be, "Begin nothing of which you have not well considered the end."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEENS.

Up to the age of fifteen or sixteen, childhood, dependent on others, properly lasts. Afterwards, the relation to things spiritual becomes closer and more direct; and while still under obedience to parents, tutors, and governors, the nature is in a manner outgrowing them. The character is, as it were, to be formed between (speaking reverently) God and itself. Nobody else can do it. It has been truly said that we may make ourselves what we please between fifteen and five-and-twenty.

Of course, what we are and what we wish to be depend much on the bent given in earlier years; but it is also the case that if that bent has been an undesirable one, or we find our ways such as we disapprove, and our training deficient, there is still time to take ourselves in hand before the real business of life begins, and do the work for ourselves. Or if, far happier, we have been trained in the way in which we should go, we have only to walk in it as obediently but with more intelligence, and becoming more and more able to see over the hedges that guard it on either side.

It does often happen that Confirmation is the starting-point in life. The Grace then imparted is spiritual strength to those who have the will to use it. Moreover, the previous preparation is, or ought to be, of a much deeper and wider nature than the religious lessons of childhood. More advanced devotional books are put into the hands; and the access to the Holy Eucharist brings a continuation of higher Help.

Thus, not merely from age, but from instruction, training, and above all Sacramental Grace, a higher level is obtained, clearer views of duty and more stringent obligations are felt; and if the world is opening on us, there is greater strength to overcome the world.

Sometimes here too begin the difficulties and questions of conscience. Family law settled everything before; now the higher law is felt. Previously the child was sure she was doing right if she was pleasing her mother. Now the thought of pleasing God has come before her more fully than before. "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly," is no longer only the signal that the Catechism is over, but a weighty present command, leading to a far more anxious estimate of right and wrong than when a few months before the knowledge of the family and schoolroom code was sufficient guide to duty and conscience.

Happy those who have but to obey more intelligently and with a deeper sense of obligation, and whose conscience continues to be guided by the same hands that helped its first perceptions, with father and mother still the entire and final judges of what is good and right, ruling the mind and opinions as well as the actions.

Of course this cannot always be the case. No person is infallible; and in the present day, it has become so much the custom to entrust the education and religious training, even of girls, to outsiders, that it is not in the least to be wondered at that their opinions and standards should not be uniformly after the parental pattern. The father and mother who have scarcely meddled with their daughter's religious instruction since it was pretty to hear her lisp her hymns, have been content to know that the governess "read with her," and finally sent her to the young-lady Confirmation classes, are utterly taken aback when they find her notions of frequent Communions, almsgiving, &c., are on a much stricter scale than was dreamt of when they were young.

It would not have been so if they had taught her themselves. Then they would have had their minds alive to the same course of religious thought, and would have been with her at every step, either directing or accompanying the bent of her mind, and at any rate remaining the mould of her opinions.

But it is not so much in the parents that I want to live now,

as in the young girl just come to the second period of life. For thus would I divide most lives: the period of being moulded by others, the period of moulding ourselves, the period of action, the period of influence, the period of rest. These last three are in fact the time for moulding others, more or less.

The girl of fifteen has generally not only reached her full stature within a few eighths of an inch, but she has passed over the childish animal restlessness and craving for motion that makes study or thought a trial. She is a great deal older than her brother at the same age, and if of the same scale of abilities, appears far superior, because his will grow later, when he will be in earnest about study that with her will have ceased to be compulsory; and yet, where he does do his best and takes an interest, he succeeds better than she does, either from masculine force or being more trained to work. His essay will be better constructed and more logical than hers; if he takes up a modern language in earnest, he will acquire as much in one vacation as she in a year or two; or if he have a fit of botany, he will go down to first principles, and begin to teach her when she thought herself teaching him.

But she thinks and reflects more. She has altogether more self-consciousness and less simplicity than he, being in truth nearer to maturity, though of less power; and she is looking out upon life, and beginning to make herself. Books that she now reads will be landmarks, both in religious and secular matters, and her tastes are enthusiastic. There is a great effervescence of vehemence, admiration, and eagerness, with more or less solid material at the bottom; an intensity of everything both of hope and fear, joy and grief, restlessness and enjoyment, hero-worship and detestation; and withal, a certain unfamiliarity with her own machinery of utterance and expression, that often makes the creature a trial to her friends and a still greater trial to herself. If she is at ease, her eagerness generally makes her commit herself by pertness—if shy or reserved, she falls into the miseries of embarrassment. Her inexperience tries experiments that become the laughing-stock of the family; her

eagerness importunes the elders; in fact, nothing but the high spirits of her age bear her through the endless *contretemps* to which her undeveloped state exposes her.

The next two or three are generally her busiest years of study, at a good school, with a finishing governess, or with masters. Even if her family be unintellectual, there is apt to be a feeling that now she must make the most of her time, and bring herself up to the ordinary level of society; nay, perhaps, the pressure is the greater in such families, because in the first place, the foundations are apt to be much worse laid; and in the next place, seventeen or eighteen is supposed to "finish her education;" and the stock she has laid up by that time is to last her for life. After that, keeping up an available amount of fashionable company, music is the most serious study required of her.

However, this class of young lady is fast diminishing, and I am not writing for such as acquiesce in such a doom of dulness. The words may startle them as they sit over German exercises in the schoolroom and hear their sisters laughing on the stairs —but they may depend upon it that perpetual amusement is the dullest thing in the world. Nothing but serious employment can give zest to recreation, only a real purpose of soul secure a sense of variety and power of playfulness.

The difference there is, or ought to be, is that before a girl leaves the schoolroom she must acquire some knowledge of a good many subjects irrespective of her taste and abilities; afterwards she is free to pursue whatever course she is best fitted for.

Then of course there are certain demands of the present level of cultivation to which every girl has to be worked up alike, if she is to be saved disgrace and mortification injurious to self-respect.

Is not this often the residuum of education, with a vague smattering of one or other accomplishment on the top?

What the imaginary damsel of sixteen or seventeen does, in fiction, is to read Dante and Goethe with ease, play ravishingly, and draw like an artist, besides being ready to command a

household, nurse a sick person, and manage a Sunday-school, by nature—in fact, she is generally the only person gifted with presence of mind or common sense.

Now what should the possible girl be able to do when the schoolrooom life ends? According to our notions, she ought to have been thoroughly well grounded in what is called an English education, and know French almost as well as her own language. If she also knows Latin grammar, and can construe a tolerably easy classic correctly, so much the better. German or Italian, or both, ought to have been begun, and brought to a state in which she can keep them up by reading, if no master be attainable.

So with exact science, she *must* have learnt enough to work with, and ought to know something of the higher branches. If she have the power, to go into algebra and mathematics is now a very beneficial study, and one much to be commended for the training in thought. It is one, likewise, in which the female mind can reach a very fair level, and which is so progressive, and so much connected with science and discovery, as to be full of new interests. But it is almost impossible to some intellects, therefore not to be universally recommended.

History should be known by this time, so far as that the outlines of English and ancient history should be thoroughly familiar, and that names and dates should be known beyond confusion. French history should likewise be known, partly as a key to that of other European states. And there should be an intelligent idea of the general course of European events; but the details may remain to be obtained by the steady reading of a portion every day, or what was once known will soon become misty; and it is *really* important to be thoroughly acquainted with history, for so much of opinion and judgment in politics, and all connected with national and individual welfare, is founded on past experience; and biography is so full of precious examples of our predecessors in the Church, that these studies are almost essential to the formation of the character.

As to accomplishments, it is well that the grammar of both music and drawing, and a certain facility of mechanical execution

should be secured, such as will give trained appreciation to the mind and usefulness to the hand. If there be a talent for either art, the girl of seventeen will of course have gone beyond this minimum; but even where she is never likely to be either musician or artist, the training of ear and eye and hand are such additions to her faculties, that they ought by no means to be neglected while still under the hands of her educators. She should know how to look at and enjoy a picture, how to enter into the charm of a landscape, how to group flowers, arrange furniture, and choose dresses with taste enough not to offend the eye; and she will often be at a loss if she cannot use a pencil to trace out a design or recall a memory.

Thus, again, she should be able to enjoy a concert "knowledgeably," and to give intelligent aid if needed in Church music, even though her capacity do not rise above mediocrity. Either of these accomplishments, or both, are however to be pursued or let alone after the groundwork has been laid, according to the bent of the powers and talents.

The real point is, that when the educators resign their charge, the pupil should be turned out with all her faculties of mind and body in the best working order possible to them, with the groundwork laid, and an intelligent power of attention capable of being used in whatever direction circumstances may lead.

CHAPTER X.

RELIGION.

CONFIRMATION has set the seal, and the young have entered on that stage which will in a manner endure for the rest of their lives, and I therefore write rather to them than of them.

This period is the most important, for it is apt to fix the

standard and tone for many years, if not for the whole life. Even the phase of religion then adopted is, in characters not unusually fickle, that which endures, except under the guidance of a husband, or of some other strong influence. In truth, most persons adopt the doctrine which has been most strongly presented to them at the moment when their souls were in an earnest state.

And what is a religious person? The original meaning of the word Religion is "rule." Therefore the religious are those who order their lives by the rule of God's Law, and live as in His sight. The happiest are such as have the spiritual sense so clear that they can perceive and rejoice in God's presence and consolation, and feel invigorated by His aid, warmed into a glow of personal love towards the Saviour as Friend and Brother, take intense pleasure in all that relates to Him, and feel that interest outweigh all others—living their Everlasting Life, as it were—consciously and really longing for Heaven.

These characters are, however, rare; and much distress has been caused among many by the refusal of a certain school of thought to acknowledge any person to be religious who is not conscious of having realized that the Atonement is personally applied to his individual sins, and has not gone through a keen sense of sin, helplessness, and relief. Very conscientious minds, of strong sense of truth, have often suffered terribly from being unable to work themselves up to this crisis of feeling, although their faith and trust may be deep.

Dutiful natures, absolutely shrinking from wilful evil, and most anxious to obey and fulfil their own sense of right, are often despised and treated as under the bondage of the Law, putting their trust in their own works, &c. But it is a safer way of looking at it, to regard them as obedient travellers in the highway of holiness, but not yet able to look over the hedges, and occupied with their surroundings, so as not yet to wish for the end of the journey, even though not doubting of its joy and blessedness.

There are, in fact, three classes: those who have attained to

happy personal love of God; those who act from strong sense of duty; and those who are absolutely careless and absorbed in the pleasures of the moment, only desirous to avoid whatever seems to them dull, depressing, or restraining. And, of course, most people belong a little, more or less, to each sort. Even the loving lose, for a time, their keen sense of spiritual things, and need the bracing of duty and fear of wrath to keep them from lapses; the dutiful win gleams of heavenly light and longing on their best side, and, on their worst, are tempted to resist every fresh demand which principle makes on them, to do or not to do; while even the careless shrink from some evils, and are at times awakened to thoughts of better things.

Sacraments are assuredly the great means of giving, upholding, and maintaining the spiritual life. The spiritually minded find in them actual bliss, and sense of union and strength; the dutiful obtain that force of will and clearness of judgment which enable them to persevere in their practical duties, although to these the temptation is apt to be that they do not, as they say, *feel* the better for them. Let them be sure that if they do not *feel* the better, they would speedily *be* the worse without them, and that to go patiently on binding the attention, if nothing else can be bound, is the way to win the inward insight at last, though perhaps not till some external shock have lessened the charm of earthly things.

There is a danger greater than theirs—that, namely, of taking intellectual or æsthetic interest in Church ordinances for devotion —yes, or merely the excitement created by what must be called "religious dissipation." In a secluded parish, or a strict family, the Church services often form the only variety or interest, together with the occupation that is given by preparation for festivals, church decking, choir practices, &c.; while in towns, the comparison of ornaments, services, and sermons, the discussion of churches and clergymen, and strong expressions respecting them, and the running after all remarkable functions, may be taken for religion. It is a fatal error, and calls for St. James's awful words, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and

bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Trial or temptation only too soon will show that this was but the seed without depth of earth, which withereth away.

Yet the scanty earth may be deepened, and become a fruitful soil. And how? By *débris* of weeds. Each temptation overcome deepens the soil, and gives a hold to the root. The great effort must be, not to dread or shun the services for fear of unreality, but to bring the life up to them, and to bridle the tongue. To take the feast without the fast is a dangerous thing, and one to which we are far too prone; for unluckily, we have not only our own selfish selves in the way, but the world is far more angered at fasting than at feasting, and obstacles are thrown in the way on the plea of health and politeness, which bring in questions of obedience. Now, there can be no question that fasts are quite as much a Divine ordinance as feasts, and that a little extra going to church, especially to varieties of services and preachers, is not the only observance enjoined on Christians. Unless something be given up so as to form a real mortification on the appointed days, abstinence is not used, and there is no safeguard against religion becoming only excitement and dissipation.

This has become even more necessary, so far as character and training are concerned, by the relaxation of strictness on Sunday. If the gravity and severity of the Lord's Day be changed for pleasure, and the Church services become (and fitly too) delights to the eye and ear, there is none of that bracing which the Puritanically inclined Christian had in giving up all secular recreation and listening to unornamented services. No; a Catholic Sunday of joy is only safe when preceded by a Catholic Friday, marked by the avoiding of some ordinary indulgence, the choice of some graver or more distasteful duty.

If heads of families would abstain from Friday parties, and housewives make it possible to fast at meals without attracting observation, the assistance to the young would be great. But where this is not the household rule, it is still possible to every-

one to abstain from something preferred, and to do something less agreeable, as a simple act of obedience to the Church and the Church's Head.

The real matter to remember is, that the sweet cannot be taken without the bitter. Church-going and church decoration become a mere indulgence and excitement, unless they be accompanied with steady habits of private prayer, self-discipline, duty to the home and to the poor, and bridling the tongue.

And often the person who quietly and unflinchingly does spend her time in unselfish care of others, and is obedient and devout up to her knowledge, is in a far safer state than she can be who indulges in far more observance, has far more knowledge, and infinitely more chatter and criticism, yet who uniformly "shrinks when hard service must be done"—nay, rather dreams of future hard service, and shrinks from homely present service.

It is difficult, not to say impossible, to lay down abstract rules of observance for everyone, because duties and characters differ so much, as well as degrees of spirituality, and what would be an advance to one would be a falling off to another. But there is a standard required by the Church of all who would not lose their outward membership with her, and this is —according to her requirements as expressed in the Prayer-book—Communion three times a year, and attendance at public worship on Sunday.

This is the lowest rule she acknowledges, as the test of actual visible union. The true inner life and perpetual struggle with sin require far more ailment, and the faith infinitely more support, than this, which is, in fact, fixed at the lowest rate for external practical purposes.

Her rules for such members as wish to be trained up within her, are morning and evening prayer, frequent Communion, and the due observance of Sundays, Feast and Fast days. Into closer details she does not go, because she has, in making universal rules, to allow for the vast differences made by station, business, and education.

No one who reads these papers is likely to have been brought up without the habit of private morning and evening prayer; and at Confirmation, it is likely that some manual has been put into her hands more advanced than the childish prayers with which she began life. If she be seeking for something of the kind, I would suggest Rev. T. Carter's *Treasury of Devotion*, or R. Brett's *Churchman's Guide*, or his *Office of the most Holy Name*. It is desirable also to use a mid-day prayer. There is generally an opportunity of short retirement at noon, or at any rate before the mid-day meal, when the recollection of our Blessed Lord's Passion on the Cross should be called before us. The devotions for the Hours will afford us help here. That for the Sixth Hour is very short, and can be said standing, so as not to attract observation.

These are the fixed times of daily prayer, that ought not to be omitted. Many find it a great blessing to observe the other Day Hours; others find it a great help to use a short prayer before going out of doors; and good Mrs. Cameron used to teach her daughters, when they went into company, to tell each other of some text to be their guide and help. Girls at home may well and happily use some of their devotions in common, especially those of praise, intercession, and memorial, and these leave precious and sweet bonds of love, "wreaths of hope for aye to live." But each soul must also have its own communings with God, and these must be alone. The individual life must have its private self-examination, confession of sins, and entreaty for pardon; and help cannot be shared with any one, however near and dear. So devotional reading may well be done in common, especially the Psalms and Lessons, as the substitute where daily service is impracticable; but the verse which should be meditated and prayed over must be studied alone.

Make some Scripture reading, however brief, a daily obligation; and likewise some endeavour at meditation, if only for five minutes; also some portion of devotional reading, such as a chapter of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation*, of Taylor's *Golden*

Grove, or a portion of some comment on the Psalms or Gospels. The time may be either at rising, bed-time, or noon, according to the power of attention, or freedom from interruption; but the duty is to be placed with one of the three times of daily prayer, as essential to the spiritual life.

Sunday church-going is, of course, the next outward observance. This ought to be looked on as our regular homage to God, and therefore to be made the first consideration in all our arrangements, *never* to be sacrificed for any consideration short of illness or absolute duty. It ought never to be given up for mere matters of convenience or pleasure, weather or comfort, unless it be a vital matter of health.

And at Church, the resolution to kneel *really*, in spite of bad example or adverse arrangements, and to have no silly fancies about cushions and hassocks to kneel upon, is a great aid to devout reverence. These sound like mere formalisms, but they are not. The forcing ourselves to put our duty to God above all else, is the way to learn the love of God.

Holyday services should also be deemed a duty, and not thrown aside as non-essential when any trifling pleasure comes in the way. Of course, if attendance thereat upsets a whole plan involving other people's gratification, they should not be made a burthen, at least those of Saints'-days; but the great days, connected with our Lord Himself, should be consecrated by worship to the full. It is not difficult, by universal consent, to go to church on, and set apart, Christmas Day or Good Friday; but the observance of both too often ends with morning service. Pleasures on Christmas Day surely ought not to exclude a second kneeling in reverence before the mystery of the Incarnation, and they ought not to degenerate into mere sport and eating. So Good Friday ought to be kept as much in quiet and solemnity as possible, and no facilities given at Church for so doing should be neglected. And on Ascension Day, a stand should be made against journeys or parties of pleasure, that would clash with as full an observance as on the other days.

Where daily service is within reach, I think I may securely say that attendance thereat becomes a blessing, if steadily persevered in, and not lightly omitted. The giving it up because "I have tried it, and I didn't seem the better for it," is a great mistake. Going to Church is not only, nor chiefly, to do ourselves good. It is primarily to praise God. Moreover, many of the intercessions in the Litany are not to do ourselves, but others, good. But reasonable hindrances must, of course, take more effect in keeping from daily than Sunday service; only let us be quite sure that it is only *true* duty to our neighbour that keeps us at home, and then we shall not be failing in our duty to God.

And above all stands the Holy Eucharist, as the means of maintaining our inward life. This is not the place for detailed exhortations on that point; but it is certain that those who love will come in reverence and godly fear full often; and those who are but trying to love will, if they are wise, cling to their Communions as the means of sustaining and quickening "the struggling spark of good within."

The preparations and self-examinations are indeed the tangible means of stirring up the soul, discovering its dangers and deficiencies. And let it be always remembered, that any occupation or amusement which dissipates the mind, and flutters the spirits too much for such preparation, and makes it seem like sacrilege to enter the Holy of Holies, must be, to one who so feels, dangerous and sinful, and a temptation that ought to be renounced. Will it be said that Sacraments, services, devotions, readings, are not religion? No, they are not; but they are the framework of religion. The manna, the water, and the Commandments, did not save those in whom the Word was not mixed with faith. The garments of Christ were nothing to those who merely thronged Him, but they wrought healing at the touch of faith. So must it be with ourselves. Here are the means, here is the connection with the great Body of Christ. Thus may we all be governed and

sanctified, if only we come, not in a light or frivolous, but in an earnest spirit, that strives both to pray and to "live more nearly as we pray."

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG-LADYHOOD.

HERE is the girl out of her schoolroom! What is she to do? Some will answer, "Amuse herself;" others, "Amuse her family;" and a third set, "Help her mother;" while there are a certain number who would say, "Improve herself," or more wisely, "Prepare for future usefulness."

Some recommend, especially in these days, a course of preparation such as learning to nurse, studying art, or housekeeping, or the like; but I am inclined to think that definite courses had better not be decided on till one-and-twenty; and that the maiden of seventeen or eighteen, without an obvious necessity, needs the training of home and family life, and the experience of society acquired in these years, before choosing any form of profession.

It is possible she may marry before one-and-twenty, but a very small minority do so; and they lose what is or ought to be a very pleasant and instructive period of life. The element of girlhood in the house is a very desirable one, and the growth of these years is needed to mature the powers. But it must be growth. The great danger of this time of life is desultoriness. It is the reaction from the methodical life of the schoolroom, or school; and where the transition is violent from actual school life, or from the high pressure of a finishing governess, there has often been a strain which makes it very desirable, almost necessary, to unbend the bow, by a journey abroad, a sea-side sojourn, a visit, or a brother's holidays. It may be best to have a real vacation from all severe application.

But this rest over, it is a great pity to leave the whole morning to chance. A little note-writing, a little vase-dressing, a little practising, a little reading, a little croquet, a great deal of chatter; and worse than all, much running in and out among near neighbours, till, even if there have been some capacity and will for self-improvement, the power of steady employment is frittered away, and no progress is made.

Mothers often contribute to this state of things, and there is something to be said for them. They have looked forward to the having a daughter out of the school-room, to be a companion, write the invitations, set up the flowers, and entertain the visitors. And all this is good and right; but a little management on their part may prevent them from making such calls on the girl's time as to be perpetual interruptions, and give her a sense that it is vain to attempt anything continuous.

A couple of hours at least in the forenoon ought to be secured for what girls call "something sensible," and then it is that, having had the foundation laid in the schoolroom, she can go on to pursue her own special bent.

The special direction is not the point, but the sobering effect and the unconscious training of regular application. Of course visitors coming for a very few days require attention, and may disturb the habit; but when they are staying for a long time, or where there is a constant succession, they ought not to trespass on the girl's time. Indeed, if they are her mother's contemporaries they will not want her; if her own, they will generally like to share some pursuit which can be modified for their pleasure if needful. To many girls, a little bit of study done together, with all the brightness of fresh intercourse, is as good as play.

And nothing is more certain than that visitors are always happiest when the natives do not sit up to "entertain them," but let them share their home life instead of disarranging it.

As to the habit that prevails where there are families of girls of about the same age, of rushing into each other's houses at all hours, and standing gossipping there, the best

thing the heads of houses can do is to prohibit it utterly till play-time, which may probably be the hour of luncheon. If the young people are really at work together, these meetings are a different thing; but purposeless gossip and dawdle should be avoided, either by their own determination or that of their parents.

The holiday-brother, or the over-worked gentleman needing entire rest, are the most lawful interrupters of the morning, but their incursions are brief, and they must sometimes be allowed to tyrannize. It is the going on day after day, week after week, without fixed occupation, with no "something attempted, something done," that weakens the whole nature, and induces frivolity and shallowness, with all their attendant mischiefs.

Nor is it a mere matter of indifference whether the habit of culture and regularity is kept up. Silly, vacant women are, it is true, sometimes preferred by men, and obtain their affections; but what a fearful charge it is for a woman to have a man's heart given to her!

A weak, narrow-minded woman, incapable of sympathy with the higher life, may be tender, kindly, affectionate, but she is the most fatal drag upon her husband or lover. He is hindered from all the nobler purposes of his life, or he fulfils them at the expense of his domestic peace. If he have to make a sacrifice of present advantage or income for the sake of principle, his wife simply views it as robbery of her children; she desires his advancement merely as a matter of personal aggrandizement, and his plans and wishes are a mystery to her. The Lydia who would not encounter India, and saddened the deep true heart of Henry Martyn, and her shadow in Miss Parr's *Her Title to Honour*, show what a piteous thing it is for a woman to fall short of the higher aim of her lover.

On the other hand, has not many a woman aided her husband over some perilous moment of his life? as Vittoria Colonna saved Pescara from becoming a traitor to his sovereign, when a smaller-minded woman would have only seen the hope of being Queen of Naples.

But some will say these are matters of right and wrong, not of learning and study. Ay; but there are cases in which a cramped uncultured mind is incapable of judging what is right or what is wrong, like the good mother in *Hanbury Mills*, who was strictness itself in household honesty, yet was undisturbed by the dishonourable action that preyed on her husband's life. And as Archbishop Dupanloup has pointed out, the most excellent and pious of women lose all the power they might have in dealing with the men of their family, if their minds are too limited to comprehend the force of the difficulties that are felt, and if they cannot understand or sympathize with brother, husband, or son. "My dear, I can't bear you to talk in that horrid way. It makes me quite miserable. I'm sure it is wicked." This may silence the speaker in the lady's presence, but will do him no good, but rather make him connect her principles with her silliness.

Schoolroom studies cannot raise the intellect enough to prevent this contraction. They cannot possibly go far enough in the time, and even if they did so, it is constant use of the powers that is needed, not only dead acquirement unquickened by exertion. Moreover, the mind is capable of taking in and digesting much more effectually in youth than in girlhood.

And apart from the desire of usefulness, far more happiness is laid up for after years by a person who occupies her mind than by one who merely devotes herself to the pleasures of youth. Distresses, illness, nervous miseries, tedium, all may be mitigated by the power of being interested in some intellectual pursuit. Even those whose abilities are not great can wonderfully improve and mature their powers, and keep themselves interested and amused in no small degree, if they have fostered any intelligent and industrious habits in their earlier days.

Different dispositions must train themselves according to their own experience; but it seems to me an excellent rule that there should be no novel touched in the forenoon, except in a language so unfamiliar that it becomes an exercise.

Some portion of a solid book should be read daily, either of

history or science; there should be some keeping up of languages and of accomplishments. The language may often be kept up by teaching a younger one, or hearing her read. Or a new language may be studied where there are facilities and there is a turn that way. German is too difficult to be really acquired in the schoolroom without peculiar advantages, and much more study needs to be spent on it afterwards, if its strength and beauty is to be really appreciated. Italian, too, can be easily learnt enough to read a plain narrative in it; but to enter into Dante requires a full-grown mind. Latin and Greek, too, may be studied more effectually after eighteen.

Perhaps the best way is to go up for the Cambridge Examinations. As these are conducted in writing, and are not competitive, they do not seem to me to involve anything unfeminine or undesirable; and the benefit of having a well-considered scheme and system given, and of being stimulated to work for an object, is very great. It is very desirable that all who are educated up to the needful point should work for it.

It requires, however, an amount of previous good teaching and ability, and also of leisure, which would put it out of the reach of many; but even these should not sit down content to be idle and trifling, but make it a duty to learn something, practise something, obtain some step in self-improvement every day, either carrying on the study they liked best, or filling up the most serious gap in their education. The self-command of setting oneself to work, and the perseverance of continuing it, would be great gain, even without any further result.

Essay societies are useful in supplying object and stimulus, but they will not serve alone, as it is in their nature to be discursive. Their name is rather unlucky, as it leads young people to set to work on abstract subjects, on which they have not much worth saying, instead of going into positive matters of fact, on which they should collect information.

Music and drawing, to those who have a turn for them, may now become arts instead of mere mechanical exercises. This is, in fact, a valuable period of life to those who are wise enough not to fritter it away.

CHAPTER XII.

CHARITY.

Nobody can be really trying to live a religious life who does not "remember the poor." Almsgiving is, without a doubt, closely connected with godliness throughout the Holy Scriptures.

The mode of doing so is the question; and there is nothing upon which ways and means so vary—from the clergyman's daughter, whose daily occupation is necessarily among the villagers, to the London girl, who is denied all access to them. This entire seclusion from all means of reaching the poor, except perhaps an importunate flower-girl at a carriage window, is, however, far less frequent than it used to be, and is seldom found in the uppermost classes. Even where it is thought unadvisable for their daughters to have anything to do with the London poor, the country life of the summer and autumn brings them in contact with the cottagers, and they generally have a warm interest in their own parish. Those who have least opportunity are the daughters of wealthy, and sometimes of professional, persons, whose out-of-town life is spent either abroad or at watering-places, where they feel no local interest nor duty. Their parents, not having been accustomed to poor people, distrust and dread them, and prohibit all such work as the London clergy could put into their daughters' hands; and there are no opportunities in their way, as it seems, of doing good.

Many girls, full of the fresh impressions of their Confirmation classes, and whose books teach them that charity is a duty, are rendered very unhappy by being thus withheld, and are puzzled as to where the duty lies.

It seems to be clear that almsgiving, up to the tithe of the means, is a duty. A tithe of the allowance is God's part. This may be given through the Offertory. A part will of course

so be given; and if there be no opportunity of direct bestowal on the poor, another portion can be spent in the purchase of materials to be made up at home for Missions—home or to the heathen—Orphanages, Crêches, or the like. Such gifts to the struggling Missions in large towns are invaluable to the over-worked toilers in parishes consisting wholly of the poor, with no admixture of the rich. To spend a daily hour in making up children's clothes, for such a purpose, would be a most wholesome exercise for the young lady who longs to find means of usefulness; and it is not difficult to discover opportunities of bestowing them on institutions where they will be distributed properly.

To be thus isolated from direct contact with the poor is not, however, the usual lot of young ladies. Those who have homes, either in country towns or the country itself, usually are allowed, and for the most part encouraged, to be useful to their poorer neighbours, so long as they do not obtrude their doings, or upset the family by them. Indeed, it often happens in these days, that the mother who in her youth had to fight a battle to be allowed to minister to the poor, finds that her daughters view "pottering about the cottages" as Mamma's dull notion of occupation, and talk the modern jargon about Sunday-schools being an infliction.

It is quite true that district-visiting is much better in the hands of the middle-aged than of the very young. The regulation of it is necessarily in the hands of the Incumbent; and he would never by preference assign a district to a young girl alone, though where it is the choice of such a one or nothing, he may be forced to do so. The best way would be to assign a girl as a helper to each elder visitor, who would make her helpful, let her supply gaps, and use her bright youthfulness to cheer the old, while letting her serve an apprenticeship, and keeping her from places where she can only do herself and the people harm.

Unluckily, girls do not like apprenticeship. The younger and more inexperienced they are, the more they want to act for

themselves; and clergymen's daughters are apt to imagine that their fathers' position confers an authority by which a chit of eighteen, who perhaps has not been three months in the parish, may assume dominion over a lady, who for twice her life-time has been doing real and earnest work among the poor.

It should ever be remembered, that charity is not charity, unless on all points it follows St. Paul's pattern in 1 Corinthians, xiii. The clergyman must of course fix the system and the rules, but his daughter ought to be specially cautious against the temptations to domineering and self-importance given by this reflected dignity.

In country parishes where there are several families of gentry, the system of allotment of districts by the clergyman is requisite, to prevent some families from being overhelped, and to hinder a habit of begging, which is one of the most ruinous that the poor can fall into.

Where the gentry frequently change, and there is no regular system, it is certain that there will be some lazy and plausible women who will besiege the new comers with tales of distress. It may nearly be taken as a rule that those who so come are the least deserving, and that the only way not to do harm is to promise to consult the clergyman, and to give no aid previously.

Indeed, it is a fatality, observed by old inhabitants, that new settlers are sure to fall in with the forward and smooth-tongued parishioners, and be taken in by them. It is well if the disgust that ensues does not extend to the struggling and independent poor.

Cottage visiting should be regulated with a due regard to the circumstances. Mere visits, where there is no special cause, are not always desirable from lay callers, especially the very young. A call with a purpose is one thing, a mere dropping-in is another. Where there is that sort of ill-health that requires dainties, or can be cheered with reading aloud; where there are collections to be made for clubs or missionary societies; where children's absence from school has to be inquired into, or their promotions explained—all these are good reasons for a visit:

but one rule cannot be too strongly impressed: cut short the conversation, and go away, the moment there is any tendency to talk of the neighbours. Very few peasant women have any notion of governing the tongue, or of accuracy; and if they once are allowed to run on and discuss the gossip of their hamlet, there is no saying what scandals they may pour forth.

Old women are the worst in this respect. They have grown up in coarser and more uneducated days, and have seen generation after generation grow up and fall into error; and they are very willing on the smallest encouragement to regale their visitors with scandal. Of course there are many who have natural and religious refinement, and have learnt reserve and prudence by experience; but these will never trench on the dangerous ground, so that it is a safe rule to silence all such conversation.

Daughters of old-established squires are safer from these mistakes, because the antecedents of everyone in the parish are known in the family; but the new comers—clergymen's daughters just imported, and still more those who have just arrived at some rented house, and are new to a country life—are always likely to take the old woman on the credit of her present tidy appearance, and never suspect that she has been anything but satisfactory in earlier life.

Therefore, girls who cannot trust themselves, or be trusted, to keep a conversation above chatter, had better only read to the old women they are not quite sure of, with only enough preliminary and concluding civility to satisfy the demands of good manners, and to hurt no one's feelings.

School is a place where more good can be safely done; but this must have a chapter to itself, and need not be more than mentioned here; but there are a few other acts of charity that are very beneficial, and in the power of those who may not have the ability to teach a class. One is to read with a servant preparing for Confirmation or for Communion—a thing much needed, for even when a girl has been at a good school, there

have often been several years almost a blank as to religious instruction or impression after she has gone out to service.

Or special instruction may be given to pupil-teachers, who require contact with really superior and educated minds, to bring them up to present requirements; and to whom lessons on any one or two subjects—such as music, history, or those religious points given out by the diocesan inspectors—are peculiarly useful.

Again, there are children taken early from school, or unable to attend on Sundays, who will generally be most thankful to become private pupils; and this is really the work that perhaps tells the most of all on their affections and character; and it can be carried out by the most shy and diffident person who is really in earnest.

Presiding over mothers' meetings had better not be attempted by anybody under five-and-twenty, except as an extremely temporary substitute for the real president.

The principle of the thing must be that the care of the poor, either by our means or by our personal exertions, or both, is our bounden duty. The mode must depend on circumstances and our personal fitness; but always the work must be under the rule of the Church and of lawful authority.

Where there are large numbers of workers, and an organized system, each may be fitted to the work she can best perform; but where, as in many country parishes, the workers are scanty, there is nothing for it but to be freely ready to do whatever comes to hand to do, and which circumstances show it to be right to undertake, without ever giving way to the consideration whether one likes it or not.

Of course there are born nurses, and these can and will do work for the poor that no else can; but the more ordinary works—visiting, teaching, reading, night-school or day-school, boys or girls, senior class or junior class, attending to clubs or libraries, &c. &c.—all must be regulated by the necessities of the case. Only mind, nothing must be left undone simply because we *do not like* the doing of it. Obedience, other duties,

absolute incapacity, are real reasons to the contrary; not distaste, and especially not the frequent excuse—"I can't do it regularly, so I had better not do it at all;" "I shall be here such a short time, it is not worth while." Many and many a time this casual aid has chanced upon—or rather been providentially directed to—some persons whose soul somehow was unattainable by the residents, or the short period of intercourse with some invalid has left precious memories with both parties for ever. Do what you can, and attend your best to what is thrown in your way, for Christ's sake; and thus best may you hope to be doing the "good works He hath prepared for us to walk in."

CHAPTER XIII.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS were the fashion of one generation, then the *unfashion*. They were in the first place often very inefficiently managed, and then were found fault with unreasonably.

A penance to teachers and taught! This stock accusation is a sentimental one, hatched by outsiders. It is, at the utmost, only true of those places where the children's seats in church are utterly deficient in comfort, and in opportunities for devotion. Even then it will generally be found, that the child has no dislike to the Sunday-school, and is uncomfortable when deprived of it. The pleasure of wearing best clothes, of seeing those of others, and of the change of occupation and interest, allure it, together with a certain sense of self-approval in doing the right thing and having so much time disposed of. To many this is the chief motive; but to many others, the Sunday-school is the brightness of a dull life.

And as to the teachers, no one who has the real faculty of teaching can fail to enjoy it. Moreover, where it is *properly done*, the training to the teacher's own mind on religious subjects

is invaluable, and the contact with various ranks above and below very useful.

As to results: when people complain of their failure, and of the general irreligion of the masses, they forget that the noisy, active, and worldly years of life are not the whole of it, and that they know not how many death-beds are soothed by the instructions gained in those childish Sundays; how many repentances may be owing to old associations—nay, how many there are who have never lost the hold then acquired, but who do not make themselves prominent. All those who work among the poor—soldiers, sailors, &c.—testify to the far greater possibility of dealing with those who have had some Sunday-school training than those who have learnt nothing, and whose ignorance is unfathomable. Another charge against Sunday-schools is, that the tone of persons in the lower class does not improve more rapidly. This is for want of reflecting that the more hopeful children go forth into the world, rise, and are seldom the parents of the next generation of National-school children. The really good servants, a far larger class than popular literature allows, are mostly the growth of country schools, National and Sunday. They are often very intelligent in religious matters, faithful and devout. It is the idle, the dull, those who have fallen into sin, that remain at the bottom of the scale: and the same process goes on with their children; the superior ones go away, the inferior remain.

Of course, too, there is, or more truly there has been, a kind of Sunday-school that did an infinitesimal amount of good; namely, those where everybody was accepted as an assistant whether qualified or not—young lady, farmer's or tradesman's daughter, steady young man, anyone who would volunteer—without any system, or any examination as to what their knowledge might be, and all were left to teach their classes by the light of nature! Now the general run of middle-class teachers have no idea of questioning; and if a book with questions be supplied, they complain that they do not know the answers; or if answers be given, they read them out in a dull voice, and

make the children verbally repeat them. So that of course the children learnt nothing intelligently until they came under the hands of the very few comprehending teachers—by which time they had grown too stupid to take much in. Moreover, most of the teachers—if they had any idea at all—thought their business was to preach, and cultivate among their pupils the peculiar Evangelical form of pious expression. Just as in those days the Religious Tract Society thought itself bound to bring in the whole doctrine of the Atonement in every penny book; so the teacher was told to instil the whole idea into each child in each lesson; and of course this led to much more of preaching than of teaching, while there was nothing definite—with that one exception—inculcated.

All these things have within the last half-century or more hindered Sunday-schools from having anything like a fair trial, though even thus, the good they have done has been immeasurable.

And now that secular instruction has become so much more engrossing and compulsory, and the time for religious teaching in the week is so much restricted, Sunday-school work is a double necessity, and has been taken up so as to make it far easier to act upon a system, and to obtain instruction as to the mode of teaching. But be it observed, that even more valuable than Sunday work is the taking a class during the hour for religious instruction on the week-days. If it be left entirely to the school staff, some of the classes must receive very inferior teaching, and the clergyman can of course teach only one class at a time—while, besides the desirableness for the children, it is a great thing to set free the younger pupil-teachers to study, or to share the lessons of the first class, instead of going over those first truths which in their young mouths can hardly fail of being mechanical and monotonous.

It is very unfortunate that most people's breakfast hour coincides with this only period permitted for religious teaching; but where there is no one else to undertake it, the effort of getting up earlier so as to breakfast by eight or half-past eight,

and letting the less strong have theirs in their own room or later, really ought to be made, for the good of the poor; or else the member of the family who can and will attend the school regularly should not be tied down to the dawdling pleasure of the latest comer.

What is to be the aim in Sunday-schools? Decidedly *not* to preach, but rather to prepare the way for preaching. The children are in hand for about seven or even ten years of their lives. In that time, they must learn "what things a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health," have a full code of moral rules, be prepared to worship intelligently, and have the understanding opened sufficiently to read devotional books, and enter into sermons, through life; and the ideas connected with the seasons of the Christian year should be so instilled that the Church-going of future times shall recall the associations of earlier times.

For this reason, I think the great subject of every Sunday, in each class, should be its own peculiar teachings. The week-day hour of religious instruction should provide for the learning of the Catechism, and for the reading of the Scriptures in narrative form; also for the understanding of the arrangement and diction of the Prayer-book; but the Sunday-school should apply all this to the seasons and festivals as they pass by.

Repetition of Scripture is one great point, for all the reasons I urged before. It is by far the most valuable store to carry away, and it is to my mind the best criterion on which to give rewards. Answering questions depends on readiness; but there are few cases in which a perfectly repeated lesson does not prove real diligence.

My own system is this: As soon as the children can learn at all, they bring the Collect, (*de rigueur,*) and if they please, a couple of verses of Hymns Ancient and Modern, and a verse or two of a Psalm, chosen for them beforehand. They cannot understand them, of course, but it is a foundation; they cannot know them too well, and they prefer them to anything of

narrative which involves hard names; and they should be asked easy questions on them.

The next class still repeat the Collect, which probably the lapse of a year has made a novelty to them; and more or less of the Gospel, according to its length or difficulty, is now added to it; they may also learn a hymn or part of a Psalm, but they ought not to have tickets for these latter if they have neglected Collect or Gospel for them.

The third must say the whole Collect and Gospel. A hymn and a parable, or part of the Sermon on the Mount (specified) are the volunteer extras, and the enterprising sometimes undertake the Epistle. This class also read one of the Lessons for the Day, and are questioned on it.

The head class say Collect, Epistle, Gospel, hymn, and about ten or twelve verses of Scripture bearing on or chiming in with the subject of the day; and they read one of the Lessons. Taking all the Morning First Lessons one year, all the Afternoon another, all the alternative a third, they have gone over them between ten or eleven years old and thirteen or fourteen; and the recurring cycle keeps up the knowledge of the whole range over which the Old Testament extends, without the too frequent recurrence of the very same chapter. So, one year they are examined on the Collect, another on the Epistle, and the third on the Gospel. The repetition year by year becomes easy to the children, while it secures the remembrance of the subjects of their repetition; and I take care to secure that the more important Psalms and other such portions of Scripture as are peculiarly valuable stores for the memory, should often be repeated—*i.e.* the fifty-first Psalm on the First Sunday in Lent, sometimes also on the Sixth after Trinity; the twenty-third either on the Second after Easter or the Third after Trinity; the fortieth on Palm Sunday or the Fifth after Trinity; the fifty-third of Isaiah either at Passion-tide or on the Third Sunday after Epiphany. In the same way, the hymns are always adapted to the Sundays.

The Catechism is repeated straight through in all the classes;

the younger ones are questioned *vivâ voce* on it, the elder bring answers to twelve questions on it, written out in their copy-books.

After this, a story is read to the children: and I cannot say I have ever seen any distaste to Sunday-school, but rather a vehement determination to come thither, even when there have been obstacles in the way. I confess there are irregularities in the discipline. The first class, having much more to do, begin half an hour sooner than the younger ones, and thus there is no "opening." Nor are rules of perfect silence so rigidly enforced as in the week.

The attendants at the two schools are nearly the same; there is a small margin of older girls who have left the weekly school, and there are little ones who do not come on Sundays; but they are so much the same, that the teaching of the one school becomes an element in the other. On every Monday, too, there is a lesson on the Prayer-book—an absolute necessity in school teaching, either Sunday or weekly, and the greatest of all preservatives from dissent.

Where there are many real helpers, it is well to have numerous classes; but it is much better to have eighteen or twenty in one class with an able and spirited teacher, than three classes of half a dozen children under two droning teachers and one child. Young or diffident helpers may be very well employed in assisting to hear the lessons by heart, and may sit by and listen to the questioning, and thereby learn to question themselves. This is a very desirable plan with unconfirmed young ladies, who only in cases of absolute lack of other teachers should be placed in charge of a class. Nobody ought to teach till the sentiment of justice and abstinence from favouritism is developed. This is even more important than knowledge.

But knowledge is very important too. This sounds like a truism, and yet the usual assumption has been that anybody knows enough to teach poor children. Now putting out of sight that a child in the fourth, fifth, or sixth standard is an intelligent being, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the very

ignorant do not need an instructed teacher. Only real information on a subject can take advantage of the dim perceptions of a pupil, and use its first footstep to lead it into the intended track, instead of turning it right round into the teacher's narrow line. Illustration, varied manners of treating a subject, seeing what various trains of thought lead to, the power of explaining words, the absolute avoidance of false doctrine and heresy—all depend on tolerable instruction. *E.g.*—a sensible teacher can connect the words, scribe, Scripture, inscription, and superscription, and thus interest the children and leave a definite impression. One who is conversant with history can explain the circumstances in which St. Paul found himself, instead of going on in a blind way from chapter to chapter. I do not say that an experienced teacher needs to prepare every lesson beforehand, because such have been so often over the same ground as to have at their fingers' ends all that needs to be taught, and a reference Bible to bring the illustrative passages to mind is all that they need; but young people cannot hope to teach usefully unless they really get up their subject, both literally, doctrinally, and practically, only actually using what may fit the needs of their scholars, but having all in their minds, even to the details of scenery and dress. This is the way to fix attention, and retain elder scholars, who cannot be expected to remain if they do not feel themselves learning something they did not know before. Considering the very great benefit of thus keeping a hold over elder young people, I should think it better to fly a little over the heads of the younger and duller portion of the class in order to have the elder ones interested.

This of course applies to places where the number of workers is too small for classification. Where it is possible, there ought to be separate classes for the confirmed, both boys and girls, held anywhere but in the school; and this is really one of the most beneficial of all such undertakings; it is very seldom that willing scholars cannot be obtained, and their age is a far more permanently impressible one than that of

childhood, besides that the alternative is too apt to be one of lawlessness and irreligion.

Where there are factories, or small home industries, such as glove or lace making, young women will preponderate in such classes; but in purely agricultural parishes the girlhood above twelve is chiefly out at service; and there is instead, a number of youths and boys, generally far from being ill-disposed, though very loutish and awkward, and nearly sure to respond to any kind and sensible cultivation. Some very bad ones there always are; but the average English lad is very glad to be saved from these, and from himself.

Where it is possible, these elder classes should be divided between those who have left school well instructed, and can go on to higher things, and those who have missed, shirked, or forgotten everything, and must begin at first principles. Both sorts are sure to be found, as outsiders from neglected parishes drop in; but it is penance to them to be put together. However, the *influence* of such teaching is quite as needful to the youth or maiden who can pass an admirable examination, as to the poor drudge or wild waif who is not clear who Adam was; so if possible make separate classes—read advanced books with the one set, and teach the others the rudiments; there will be a most valuable intercourse in either course, often more useful than the instruction.

Confirmed scholars should always have the Holy Communion kept as it were before their thoughts. Some special hymn or reading bearing upon it should be selected for the Sunday when the larger number is likely to communicate; and the unconfirmed should be led to the thought. It is a great mistake to treat it as a subject quite out of the range of young children; indeed, I verily believe that the deficiency of communicants is owing to the larger mass of the poor having been taught next to nothing about its necessity when they were at school.

It is, in fact, necessary to teach the poor far more theology in early childhood than the rich, because this is the only time they are within reach. Just as a young gentleman's education

is really beginning in a public school, the poor boy's is entirely stopped, except for the opportunities of night or Sunday-school; and it is much the same with the girl. Service is but a lottery as to religious opportunities, and very, very few girls or parents will be found to sacrifice worldly advantage for their sake; nay, the best endeavours to place a child out favourably are often frustrated by some unguessed-at peril—some unprincipled or ill-tempered fellow-servant, or some folly of the child's own or her parents.

And after all, what training do the most ordinary good families give, such as are caught at for our girls? Family prayers, a Sunday exposition, Church-going in turn. It is much if a watch be kept whether the younger servants have the opportunity of communicating—the young girl of fourteen or fifteen is unusually favourably placed if these are her privileges.

Must we not then strive that the system of faith and duty should be as complete and indelible as we can make it before she leaves our care? She *may* fall on a family where special instruction is given to young servants, or on a parish where there are communicants' classes; but alas! these are but exceptions.

But above all, let our Sunday-school children be taught prayer. If they truly pray, we may trust them. Their intercourse with Heaven is open; they will go on from strength to strength.

Of course we can do no more than give them prayers, and entreat that they may be used. We cannot follow them home and see whether they are; but we can pray for them—we can sow the seed.

But let us remember that the Divine Sower Himself only represented one-fourth part of the seed as bearing fruit, and that *with patience.*

Hosts of disappointments we shall have. Even the responsive few we shall find more often due to good homes than to our school teaching. But there is this hope. Many of the good homes which now send forth children of high promise, are the

homes of parents who were great disappointments in their early youth, but have considered their ways, and sought the old paths.

And shall we think any pains too much to bestow, when we remember that this may indeed be "sowing the seed of eternal life?"

> "In the morning sow thy seed,
> And in the evening withhold not thine hand;
> For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that,
> Or whether they both shall be alike good."—*Eccles.* xi. 6.

CHAPTER XIV.

REFINEMENT AND FINERY.

WHAT is refinement? Is it a thing to be cultivated or not? The last generation would have answered the question with far less hesitation than the present, except when the word is taken in the false sense of luxuriousness.

By refinement, then, I mean the Christian's adoption of "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" and his shrinking from all that is coarse, gross, sensual, or connected with any form of vice or meanness. Finery is the exaggeration of this quality, becoming weak, helpess, sentimental, fastidious, affected, censorious, and ridiculous. As soon as self comes in, refinement becomes finery.

Refinement is just as much a Christian grace in a man as in a woman; but he is not such a hateful unsexed creature without it as a woman is. No one can truly keep that Baptismal vow to renounce the sinful lusts of the flesh without becoming refined; and thus we see that genuine refinement belongs to no station. It is simple delicacy both towards others and oneself,

though the estimate of what such delicacy requires varies with breeding.

The connection with luxury is perhaps this. The rougher and ruder the life, the fewer the protections from want of niceness. A pocket-handkerchief is a refinement; but perhaps a parasol is only a comfort. Again, hard toil and scanty accommodation, with brief time or space for attending to the person, lead to an obtuseness to the requirements of decorum, which cultivation and more favourable circumstances again renew; and thus a competence is almost needful for the fostering of perfect refinement, though it can, and does, exist in very arduous circumstances.

It is, in fact, the outcome of purity of heart, showing itself in all our words and deeds, in appropriate actions or refrainings, and becoming a law to itself as to what the innate spirit of delicacy can accept or reject.

Our bodies are the earthen vessels containing the treasure of our souls, and of yet more—the Holy Spirit. We have to respect them as such, "and possess our vessel in sanctification and honour." This is the underlying principle; and refinement draws the line between this reverence to our sanctified bodies, and the making idols of the flesh. Self-indulgence and coarseness are alike ruinous to it.

To give an instance or two. An unrefined woman, deprived of servants, will live in a horrible state of slovenliness, because she will not exert herself; a refined woman will never rest till all around is clean and tidy. An unrefined woman is only just withheld from open indecorum by Mrs. Grundy, and indulges in whispers, and private discussions of transgressions or infirmities, on which the refined one is perfectly silent, or speaks with straightforward modesty when forced to enter on the matter. Both may be equally ready to help in trying or disgusting sicknesses, and it does not always prove that the refined one has the most shrinking to overcome; indeed, as she is sure to be the least self-indulgent and best disciplined, it is more likely that her nerves will be less in rebellion, and her mind

more occupied with the sufferer than with herself; but this is too much a matter of physical temperament to be decided thus. However, the most refined woman I know, is also the most perfect nurse and assistant in all the little accidents of life. It was the tender and delicate woman, who would not adventure to set her foot on the ground for tenderness and delicacy, whose heart was hardened in the straitness of the siege towards her own children—because her delicacy was selfishness; but it was the king's sister, the saintly Elisabeth, who cut up her own dresses for her little companion in captivity, and smiled when she was obliged to bite off her thread for want of scissors, when mending her brother's coat.

There is a grand refinement of hardihood and exertion, and this is that to which the modern world is most averse. That which saves it trouble, or is mere ornament, it is willing enough to call refinement; but it has no sympathy with the sensitive reticence that will take any trouble rather than endure a soil—that will abstain from a book or a newspaper rather than learn details of impurity, and will bear fatigue rather than lounge publicly in a self-indulgent way. Oh no! this is prudery, absurdity, old-maidism! Refinement, in most people's notions, is just what makes life most comfortable. To my mind, on the contrary, it is that which makes it most noble, most spiritual, farthest removed from the animal. There was far more refinement in the never letting the back touch the hard wooden chair, than in lying back with raised knees and crossed legs on a spring-cushioned embroidered seat, in a room full of gentlemen. Was the grandmother or the grand-daughter likely to be the most disciplined, self-controlled being? Refinement was much cultivated in the earlier years of the century, and had a tendency to degenerate into finery. Miss Lily Black, in *The Inheritance*, is a grand example; but there was much to be said for it. Look at those delicate miniatures of gentle-faced ladies, with little curls over their pensive brows; people like sweet Fanny Price, in *Mansfield Park*, whose innate modesty was guarded on all sides. They shrank from all exposure; never went by a

public conveyance, or were carefully escorted if they did; never walked unattended in London, nor with an unmarried companion of the other sex anywhere else, dropped correspondence with male cousins as soon as childhood ended, and in fact, lived in what the present generation would view as an intolerable bondage to proprieties.

These were the ordinary *bienséances* of young-ladyhood, and what sort of woman did they make? Where the original substance was good, earnest, and energetic, they made such women as we have learnt to know in Maria Hare, or as most of us still remember, as living models of gentleness, purity, and delicacy of thought, word, and deed, reigning over the affections of all around them by a tender grace which age cannot take away. Their manuscript books of extracts, chiefly of their favourite poetry, in a delicate, peaked, Italian hand, their long crossed letters, their dainty pencilled drawings full of endless labour, represent them almost perfectly; but they were very steady and industrious, reading solid books, often abstaining from all ordinary novels, keeping up their accomplishments as a duty in requital of the money spent on them, and fully and completely acting up to the mission of the household spirit, brightening, soothing, influencing, making home sweet and refreshing to weary manhood.

The disadvantage lay in the temptation to weaker natures to become helpless and sentimental, if not affected. Charity was certainly crippled by the resolution to see nothing that ought not to be seen; and the persuasion that it would be absolutely wrong to go where vice or rudeness would be encountered—a sort of offence against one's own modest dignity, and against the guardianship of father or husband. Much in the way of kindness, and something in the way of teaching, was done; but great efforts, such as those of Miss Nightingale or Miss Rye, never could have been thought of; and for a lady to penetrate the back slums of London, or even to keep a night-school for lads, or to train the Church choir, would have been thought unfeminine.

The doors have been opened. Girls have a much freer, bolder life, far less hampered by scruples. Waltzing has become so universal, after long protest and resistance, that most of my younger readers will stare at the bare notion of any objection thereto; hunting has ceased to be confined to "the Lady Di Spankers" of society; real ice skating is as unimpeachable a feminine pastime as walking; travelling alone is hardly doubted about; and except in very early girlhood, there is really no place into which charity is not a passport for a lady. Nor do I say for a moment, that such things are censurable. There are many in which custom is really the rule; but the point to be considered is, where it may safely be trusted.

In the first place, all sports which the custom of the time appropriates to men, are to be avoided by women. Riding to the meet, and skating, can now be done by the quietest girls; and other like amusements, where numbers protect one another, and no remark is excited, are harmless, because there is no usurpation of manhood. For my own part, I confess to a great dislike to any woman taking part in sports connected with the destruction of animal life. Toleration of riding to the meet sounds like an inconsistency here; but it so seldom brings a quiet woman into close quarters with the actual destruction of the fox, that it is little more than an object for a ride; but the walking out with shooting gentlemen, using a gun, or fishing, must involve so much actual sight of pain, terror, and death, that I cannot imagine how any gentle-hearted woman can endure it. I do not think any amount of custom can reconcile shooting game with true womanhood; though as to shooting at a target, there is no more harm in doing so with a pistol than in doing so with a bow and arrow; and there may be moments when the knowledge how to use a weapon may be needful in self-defence. But as to the fashion of women looking on at pigeon-shooting matches, it is absolutely hateful. It is a base cowardly sport for men themselves, devoid of all the exercise and spirit of the chase, which partridge-shooting has, and pheasant-shooting used to have before *battues* set in; and ladies ought to use all their

influence against it, rather than encourage it by looking coolly on at the fluttering agonies of dying birds. It is the first stage towards a bull-fight.

I know I shall much offend many of my readers by saying that I think men have done much to lower the tone of refinement in women by making them submit to smoking. Forty or fifty years ago the gentlemen I knew best (officers in the army, some of them) would have no more thought of accustoming their wives, daughters, or sisters to the smell of smoke than they would to the atmosphere of a public-house. They would have thought that something of the woman's grace was lost by treating her with the disregard thus implied, and that they failed in respect to her sex. Most gentlemen were of this mind; they seldom smoked themselves, and when their sons took up the practice, forbade it in the house, and were much displeased if they saw it done before their daughters. Girls, however, are apt to take the side of their brothers when they think them deprived of a harmless pleasure. Fun did something, and so did the pleasure and honour of being with a brother; and the young men themselves viewed the parental dislike as old-fogeyism, the feminine distaste as simple fidget and selfishness. I have even seen it argued that smoking is no more selfish than tea-drinking—as if tea poisoned the sweet air all around it, or left fumes in rooms and clothes!

I do not say the sisters were always wrong. It is better to put self aside than to drive away, and lose, a brother's confidence; but I do say that the whole tone between man and woman is lower than it was in those days, and that the habitual self-indulgence in a free-and-easy custom, hardly respectful, cannot but have assisted in this.

The custom has become such that it involves no discourtesy nor disrespect, and very few of our younger ladies would object to it in the open air, or where furniture would not be infected. Indeed we are told that no lady who does not tolerate it can expect to keep her husband or sons at home. If that be indeed the case, she must give way rather than leave them to temptation;

but I grieve for the loss of the chivalrous tone which upheld woman's self-respect by not tacitly exacting from her the endurance of a free and easy habit belonging to times of unrestraint. Of the necessity in damp, unhealthy places, and periods of exposure, and the soothing at times of fatigue and nervous excitement, of course every reasonable person is convinced; but apart from this, it seems to me that a woman should use her influence as far as she can against such a useless, and wasteful custom, and try to prevent it becoming almost a necessary of life.

And as to the custom creeping in of girls enjoying cigarettes —a thing begun in fastness and fun, and excused by the customs of foreigners—it is one of the readiest ways of unsexing themselves, and losing all the reverence due to womanhood, which reverence is a greater benefit to man than even to woman.

After this I need hardly say what I think of the practice of going and sitting with men in their smoking-room, their avowed place of liberty and unrestraint. We may say we are at home with them and can trust them. I hope we can, but to follow them into their own peculiar haunts is not fit for any woman or girl, and if she does it in thoughtlessness at first, she will either have to draw back, or will have the true charm and grace of her sex spoilt. It is not a boon companion that a right-minded man wants, it is something to call out his higher feelings of respect and honour.

Going about alone in London, walking and corresponding with young men, &c.—all the many daring things that young ladies attempt out of what they want to consider innocence, but which is really a spirit of defiance and desire of liberty, excitement, and even notoriety—all these things are, when not exactly perilous, destructive to the gentleness and modesty, which—tell us what modernism will—are the chief grace of womanhood. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price;" and woe be to the nation if we women throw it away, on the plea that we can guard ourselves.

Guard ourselves! Take care of ourselves! The very idea

implies danger. Where there has been need of defence, there comes a hardening; and that delicate bloom of perfect modesty must needs be rubbed off. And it is a far greater and truer grace than any achievement which is at best only a feeble imitation of man.

This is not saying that the woman should be prudish, or helpless, or inactive; though on the whole, Mrs. Barbauld's mother was right, and prudishness is the better extreme in a girl than fastness.

Real refinement has the full play of all its faculties; and its very modesty hinders it from dependence and feebleness. It is so instinctive, that to lay down rules for it is almost injurious to it. All that can be said is, that it is the delicate aroma of Christianity. It shrinks from no task, however painful or disagreeable, that ought to be done; but simply goes through with it. It makes no parade of sensitiveness or of decorum, but it silently stands aside from whatever jars on its sense of the fitting. It loves the shelter of home, the protection of parent, brother, or husband; yet it will pass over ordinary bounds when the call comes, not of pleasure, but duty. All that is tainted with evil, and bears the trail of the Serpent, is hateful to it. No undesirable newspaper report, no novel founded on crime and full of questionable situations, are studied by it. It does not "take pleasure" in the story of the evils it is restrained from committing. Nay, its very words are pure from all those slang terms of doubtful origin, the charm of which is a certain audacity and naughtiness in using them, and the cheap wit of misapplying them.

Very poor fun indeed it is, to borrow from a schoolboy what he has borrowed from the fashionable *répertoire* of his school, some expression, ludicrously inappropriate, and to apply it *usque ad nauseam*, with the more zest, because it is known to vex the ears of elder people. And where did these terms come from? Schoolboys are generally their most respectable origin. Many are borrowed from the lowest of the low, and are connected with the cant terms of vice. Alas for the pure grace of a

lady's tongue, when her speech and ideas are moulded by slang!

The saying about calling a spade a spade has also done harm. It was a reaction from the evil of veiling a coarse idea under an elegant periphrasis, and it goes on the principle that to change the name does not improve the idea. That is true, but the reluctance to mention at all what is not fit for polite ears is being fast lost. The rude outspokenness is becoming obtruded, and the ideas follow the words till we are in serious peril of forgetting the knowledge of evil is not wisdom, and that St. Paul tells us that "such things ought not to be named among Christians."

In those days when finery, *i.e.* over-refinement, was the danger, there used to be crusades against the use of the term *vulgar*, when it was misapplied to what was merely homely and simple. Now vulgarity, in its true sense of the basely common, is one great danger of our whole society. Bluntness to real delicacy of thought, action, and word, is cultivated, under a supposed notion of liberty; and our women and girls are doing their utmost to throw away all the restraints that authority, hereditary delicacy, and conventionality, still impose on them; and therewith all true respect. For a man will never respect an inferior copy of himself, in boldness, skill, and loudness. He may laugh with her, and call her capital fun, but he cannot honour her, nor feel tender fostering affection for her, nor will she ever assist him by purifying and refining society. She will be no restraint on his bad habits, no curb on the coarseness of his nature. All she will be, is an unsexed creature, lowering the whole standard of womanhood, and therewith of human nature. Where woman is not refined, man will not be chivalrous.

Oh! then, that our ladies would beware of throwing away the jewel that will never recover its lustre if they let it once be dimmed!

CHAPTER XV.

DRESS.

TAKE it for all in all, I suppose dress is the greatest temptation to the greatest number of women in existence.

The subject is the more difficult, because the taste is to a certain degree instinctive, and there is no reason to think that it ought to be totally repressed. Abstinence from all adornment is a part of asceticism—a token of repentance and mortification. Those who seek the counsels of perfection become rigidly heedless of personal attire, alike from conviction of its worthlessness, from contempt for the flesh, and from the desire to waste nothing on it that can be devoted to better purposes.

But there will always be two schools of thought in the Church. Just as in worship, one seeks the spiritual and severely simple, and another looks "for glory and for beauty;" so one school views, like St. Francis, the body as *l'ânesse*, to be forced down, starved, and slighted as an enemy; another looks on it as the Temple of the Holy Ghost, to be honoured as such, and as belonging to Christ, and therefore to be decked with whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report. And wisdom is justified in all her children, provided they be truly the children of wisdom, whether with Dr. Watts they say—

> "The art of dress did ne'er begin,
> Till Eve, our mother, learnt to sin;"

or with Mr. Keble—

> "The very weeds we daily wear,
> Are to faith's eye a pledge of God's forgiving might."

The garments given by God were skins of animals, no doubt sacrificed, and thus an emblem of the robe of righteousness given to the members of Christ. Surely thus to ennoble our

views of our raiment, and making them to the glory of God, is a better safeguard against their temptations than it can be to denounce them as badges of guilt, and deliver them over to the category of evil! There is all the difference between the wedding garment and the convict dress.

That the women of the Old Testament were dressed with Oriental richness there is no doubt, nor are they censured for so arraying themselves. The virtuous woman clothed her household in scarlet; and the denunciations in the third chapter of Isaiah are rather directed against the priestesses of Ashtaroth than against the ladies of Judah. It is the Apostolical rule of St. Peter that seems to go the most strongly against ornament in dress: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

It has been held from all time, that St. Peter does not mean to forbid the plaiting of hair or wearing of gold; but merely to show that the woman's adornment is not to lie in these things, so much as in her meek and quiet spirit, which will of course show itself in her whole person.

Person, as is well known, means a mask—our human frame being the guise in which we act our part in the scene of this world; and the individuality of our souls is so strong, that not only have they the power to mould the features, gestures, and expression of this permanent mask of theirs, but likewise to give each one's apparel a character of its own; so that a familiar eye can discern individuals with full security, even when uniformly clad; and we all of us know people to whom varieties of dress make no difference—some who look dowdy, tumbled, and washed-out, in the newest and gayest clothes; and others who infuse into the shabbiest and oldest an air and a grace of their own.

What then are the great requisites and duties of dress? Let us try to define them. Modesty, refinement, suitability to

circumstances and means; and incidentally, truth, charity, self-denial, and honesty.

Modesty, then, to begin with—since it was the first and original object of dress. The standard, like everything else connected with this subject, is a variable one, as is shown by the contrasted feelings of the Eastern and Western women as to uncovering the face or the feet; and there are sometimes fashions which become indecorous merely from persons who have brought them into ill repute, like the yellow ruff in which the poisoning Mrs. Turner was hanged.

Two temptations beset the sense of modesty—namely, slovenliness and fashion. The first is more the trial of those who have either weak health or indolent natures, and yet are forced to work hard. It is an act of charity to excite the self-respect of such as these, by treating them with courtesy such as may prevent the hopeless dejection of self-neglect.

Fashion is a much more subtle temptation, because the eye and taste get gradually demoralized. Some periods are worse than others in this respect; but there will always be tendencies to be guarded against—either those that are actually to indecency, or merely to indecorum; *e.g.* the quietest bonnet of the fashion of 1875 would have been most indecorous in 1830, and could have been worn by no respectable person, though now the "cottage bonnet" would be an enormity. But when in the beginning of the century, ladies, trying to be classical, wore hardly two petticoats, and backed out of the room for fear their fathers and aunts should be horrified by the statue-like outline of their torsos, fashion went a good way beyond the simply indecorous. And the same may be said of the height of the corsage, and probably always will be; for some women will unfortunately always be found, who are sufficiently lost to modesty as to be willing to attract by the displaying of themselves; and there are others who thoughtlessly imitate them, because they will not be outdone; and thus a public fashion is formed, which absorbs the thoughtless, and makes others afraid of the suspicion of prudery.

Once for all, exposure is always wrong; whatever be the fashion, it is a Christian woman's duty to perceive when indecency comes in, and to protest against it by her own example and influence, though not by censoriousness.

Relative indecorum should also be guarded against. The first entrance of a fashion that tends to a bold appearance, ought to be resisted. Mannish dresses are undesirable, on this account; and it is well to cultivate the shading of the face as much as possible—not wearing such hats as are barely endurable because others have them. Exposure of the face is one of the great tendencies of the time; and though it is not exactly indelicate in itself, yet the bold confronting of notice that is involved in going out with a totally unprotected countenance, thrown into prominence by the head-dress, cannot be modest in itself; nor does a veil coming close over the nose materially alter the matter. Many perfectly retiring quiet girls adopt it simply from custom, and their refined faces cannot be entirely spoilt by it; but when the same hat is perched on a coarse face, the evil of the example is apparent. It is one of the incidental ways in which charity can be borne in mind—never to promote a fashion which is bad for the lower classes. And however prevalent a mischievous fashion may be, if good women will only stand by one another, they can always prevent non-compliance from being painfully singular. Crinoline was only absurd, not indecorous, therefore it was not worth while to go against the stream; but the low corsage, and tight skirt, and some kinds of head-gear, should be avoided at any cost of singularity.

Colours likewise are involved in the matter of modesty. What is obtrusive is never fit to put on, for it brings eyes upon the wearer. There is no need to give instances. Most of us understand that there is a difference between brightness and gaudiness; and if, unfortunately, we are born without the eye to see what is appropriate, observation from others will generally teach it. To be conspicuous is the special thing to be avoided. Glaring contrasts, hasty adoption of fresh modes—all that

challenges observation—are inconsistent with the soberness and "shamefastness" which form part of the Christian woman's adorning.

Refinement comes next—nay, is a part of modesty; since in it is included all the purity which is called for by the sense of the dignity of our bodies—all the refinement which cleanses that which is within as well as that which is without, and would rather go through much additional fatigue than submit to any disorderliness. Hair as neat when we are alone as in company—scrupulously brushed, not surface smoothed—is one token of such a spirit; and to our mind, certain fashions which seem to revel in untidy arrangement or non-arrangement thereof, scarcely are consistent with the dainty niceness of true womanhood. The associations of the loose unkempt locks of Sir Peter Lely's portraits are not those of pure and dignified maidens or matrons. Hair is the woman's glory; but it is often her torment in the earlier years of her youth, when she has to contend with unmanageable tresses, and her toilette is a struggle with them, especially when there is any weakness of health, or extra chill of weather. But it is well if she bravely meet this minor misery, and reduce the hair to well-ordered obedience—not wasting time in needless elaboration, but obtaining the fresh sensation of a head thoroughly brushed, and securely and neatly arranged. Tumble-down hair, falling dishevelled on the shoulders, sounds grand in fiction, but it is disgusting in real life; and when once the melancholy moment of "turning up the hair" has come, no girl whose life is to be spent without a maid should be content till she has learnt to make her edifice firm, and as graceful as nature will permit. But refinement—as well as truth—will forbid her eking out her own tresses with other people's, or changing the colour. This is finery—that very different thing; though it is one of the great difficulties to draw the line between the two, especially when dealing with classes below us; and nothing is more undesirable than to check aspirations for refinement by treating them as mere ambition and vanity; *e.g.* gloves, white pocket-handkerchiefs,

muffs, parasols—nay, even the umbrella when first introduced—have in their turn been viewed by Ladies Bountiful as mischievous innovations; yet they have no small effect in refining the village girl. They become finery, and not refinement, if the needful under-garment be sacrificed to them, or worn dirty and ragged, or not at all; but, though we may laugh at the idea, it is only exceptionally that a woman can be perfectly refined over hopeless plainness of apparel, where she is allowed no exercise of taste. Even Quakerism reacted in exquisite fineness of material and beauty of work; and conventual garbs are apt to lapse sometimes into slovenliness, and sometimes into the little niceties which reforming abbesses so sternly condemned. You can hardly expect to get a lady's sentiments into your maid or school-girl, unless you freely permit her to fulfil her ideal of a lady in matters that are not all foolish ornaments, but absolute comforts and refinements. Story-books for the poor have created a most impossible set of heroic girls and mothers, neat as new pins in the dullest imaginable wearing apparel, which, by the by, they could never procure. If an elderly lady wishes for the patterns of her prime, she has to pay highly for them at her milliner's. Poor people's shops have only the popular extreme of the fashion.

The really kind thing to do by young girls, at service or at school, is to train their natural taste for embellishment, not to quash it and treat it as an offence, so as to give every compliance with fashion the zest of a victory over authority. What is really becoming and convenient, let us accept for them as we would for ourselves, and acknowledge that it is as much in the course of nature for a maiden to enjoy arraying herself, as for a bird to plume itself. And let us not be unreasonable enough to expect in the most uneducated part of the community, an indifference to ornament that is scarcely to be found in the most educated, and not always for good there!

The hard mannish woman, who runs into harsh eccentricities in dress, is not commendable on that score. It is but an uglier kind of vanity. No rule for female dress was ever better than

that of the adviser of Marie Therèse de l'Amourous, when he told her that whatever attracted notice in dress, whether too much or too little, was an error.

Suitability to circumstances and means brings in all the question of expense as well as taste. The matter of expense is one of those questions with a sliding scale, on which it is so hard to lay down rules. The ascetic, and even the philosopher, might say, "Spend not a farthing needlessly on the perishable body;" but other voices, especially while there are those around us who love us, bid us think, that the raiment of our station, fitly arranged, is a part of the character of the virtuous woman, and enhances the dignity and sweetness of her portrait.

It is right, then, that the costliness of each person's dress should be in keeping with her means. Even very large means do not, however, justify wanton and wasteful expenditure—such as that of paying for the destruction of a pattern, that the dress purchased may be unique; or the inordinate desire for change and novelty, which pays a fancy price for some new invention. Freaks like this are the insolence of wealth and fashion, and are unjustifiable on any score; but chiefly because money is a stewardship, and there are thousands of objects for it, which make squandering it away a sin of omission. Besides, the example of extravagance is most contagious and mischievous. Are we not still suffering from the expensive style begun in the Second Empire, and since upheld by the American taste? Economy is now shown in the choice of wretched cheap material, instead of in the durability and simplicity of the garment. Instead of one handsome dress, simply made, and capable of being turned and altered, half a dozen trumpery ones, with material not worth making up, are called for; and if good stuff be employed, it is so cut to pieces by the present fashion as to be incapable of being used again; and we think of Petruchio's indignation—"I told you to cut the gown—I told you not to cut it to pieces."

A good silk made as simply as possible, and fitting perfectly, is the most lady-like of dresses, and moreover does the least

harm. Nine times out of ten, trimmings are only useful to conceal bad fit, or bad work, or sometimes wear; *pour cacher la misère*, as the Frenchwoman cleverly said. When they are to hide honest wear, and to "gar auld claithes look amaist as weel as new," they are highly respectable and ingenious. But when, as Mrs. Whitney puts in it *We Girls*, they are merely a fidget, and a means of spending as much time and money with a sewing-machine as with a needle, they are utterly unprofitable waste, and but that the eye is vitiated, we should not be able to endure them.

The duty of most girls with regard to dress is to be always ready to appear in some garb, quiet, yet fresh, and pretty, according to the occasion, but without vain expenditure. Forethought and good sense will generally make this possible. Parents calculate allowances according to what they expect of their daughter, and according to whether she has the use of a maid's needle, or depends on her own. When she has to make, alter, or mend for herself, questions of expense often resolve themselves into questions of time, and she has to decide whether such and such a trimming is to be paid for, made by herself, or dispensed with. It is a matter only to be decided by the preponderance of the duty of saving money or time; and sometimes indeed it is the truest way of being charitable to employ some needy and industrious fingers. But with this proviso—Never employ such workers at a sum below the proper price, or you are as bad as the worst slop-shop. Economy is not economy but cheating, if you do not render to every man, and still more to every woman, their due. Running after cheap advertising shops, and buying fabulously cheap ready-made garments, is encouraging the cruel oppression of the poor workers. The money spent in the absurd advertising system must come out of someone, either the buyer or the worker; and advertisements of the same article running down a whole column of a paper, or flaring on every wall, ought to be a warning to every reasonable creature against the purchase. The better sort of shop only advertises in a moderate degree, when there is anything expedient,

to be made known. Everyone knows such trustworthy shops of old-established tradesmen in London, and still more in country towns, where long custom and confidence creates a real dependence: and where one is safe in accepting the recommendation of the sellers. Such houses are considerate with their work-people, and their sellings off of old season's stock are genuine. It is false economy to go after bargains, and leads to other evils.

If it be an object not to be expensive, choose durable colours, and let the *pièce de resistance* of your dress be one of those tints that "fight" with the fewest colours, fade the least, and clean the best. White, black, and delicate neutral tints, and brown-holland, are always safe, and can be varied infinitely by delicate bright ribbons. Half the bad taste for which Englishwomen are proverbial comes of the improvident choice of unmanageable colours, where the wardrobe is small. A dress and its appliances may perhaps go together perfectly, but a little change in the season may necessitate the use of another wrap, or a different bonnet has to be worn; and if the colours will not assort themselves, it cannot be helped; to get a new article would be wrong till the old is nearly worn out. Granted; but those who mean to be economical should never buy what will only look well with one other colour. It is often true self-denial to wear unbecoming colours rather than go to needless expense; but self-denial in choosing the less attractive but more useful article in the first instance would prevent the ugliness of the world from being increased. Bright delicate blues and pinks can be used in large masses by the young, either in morning muslins or evening silks; but nothing but whites or blacks go well with them, and ordinarily these colours are better garnish than full material. The scarlet or crimson shawl or cloak is a time-honoured wrap, in perfect taste over blacks, greys, or dark browns; but no two reds together are admissible. There is nothing wrong in taking questions of complexion and becomingness into account, though to dress coquettishly to attract notice is a very different thing.

Ornament has next to be considered; and first of all rules

relating to it, comes the rule of truth. All attempts to pretend to beauties that we do not possess are clearly falsehood, and therefore wrong in themselves, and injurious to the genuine possessors. It is parting with all the true dignity of the virtuous woman to try to change hair or complexion; and it is a strange and sad proof of the evil influences of fashion that so many good women should deck themselves with borrowed plaits without compunction, "because everyone knows it is not their own," and that in the face of universal protests against the ungraceful fashion of an unnaturally large head!

False pretences at wealth are nearly as bad as false pretences at beauty. In the last generation, mock jewellery was the acme of vulgarity. Now, love of trinkets has made tinsel in reality more vulgar, because more common; but unfortunately not confined to the second-rate classes. Only the truly refined will now refuse to wear anything that is not what it pretends to be—will prefer an honest pebble to a sham jewel, and turn away from false coral and glass jet. The person who utterly repudiates unreal gew-gaws is true and just; and what is more, she saves a great many small sums for higher purposes.

The higher rulers of good taste have shown us that nothing is really graceful that has not a *raison d'être*. Dress should resemble early English, rather than Tudor, architecture, and its ornaments be beautiful necessary finishes and fastenings. The brooch is almost a necessity; and the bracelet is a natural ornament—as are the flowers in the hair, the feather in the hat. To the whole bird, or to an entire wing, I own a dislike, as looking murderous, and reminding me of the extermination of all the more beautiful birds, wherever the orders of fashion-mongers can reach.

Skirts looped up with flowers, where it would be unnatural to fasten real ones, do not seem to me to be good taste; though the associations of a ball-dress are in favour of them, and perhaps the dancer is supposed for the nonce to be a fairy and in fairy costume. Artificial flowers do not exactly come under the category of shams, since no one wears them to deceive; and

though a battered flower in a dirty cap, or torn hat is the most disgusting ornament the poor bedeck themselves with, tolerable flowers are so cheap, that the time is past for their inhibition, and it is wiser to show in what style they should be worn.

Falsehood as to amount of material is thorough bad taste, if no more. The long train gathered up behind became our great-grandmothers; but the *real* folds of drapery are ill-replaced by a mechanical cushion standing out like an excrescence; and a flounce, with lining alone under it, gives a sense of spiteful triumph to those who detect the make-shift.

And *truth* in dress leads to charity; not only by avoiding setting bad examples, but by making the worn dress fit to be given away, or cut up for a poor child. To give away disused finery is no kindness; but a good useful dress, past its first prime, is no small benefit to a poor woman, and if it have not been spoilt in the making, will last her for years. Such considerations as these are well worth keeping in mind when we choose our dresses, for they greatly increase our powers of kindness; and if there be a little restraint as to shape and colour, it will probably rather improve than detract from the general effect.

"Do all to the glory of God" is the rule of rules; and above all, it should make our Sunday dress such as may really be one of the fair elements of brightness of the Lord's Day, and not a distraction to our fellow-worshippers. Whether they are occupied in censuring its vanity, or contriving an imitation of it, it is making our sisters to offend.

> "The Sunday garment glittering gay
> May steal the Sunday heart away,"

—not only of ourselves, but of many more.

Let us then be very careful how we deal with that especial trial of womankind, the garb in which we clothe ourselves.

CHAPTER XVI.

AMUSEMENT.

THE amount of society and amusement that young people enjoy is regulated by their parents' will and circumstances, but the right and wrong of the matter needs consideration; for perhaps the consistency of such with our vow to renounce the world is one of our chief difficulties. In fact, it all depends upon the spirit, not on the kind or quantity.

The Evangelical party took a much easier line when they flatly denounced all balls, theatres, and the like; but it was not long before it was felt that there could be just as much worldliness at a religious tea as at a ball; and the reaction from their severity is hardly having a happy effect at present, for there is a tendency to bring the utmost amount of amusement into the closest and most incongruous juxtaposition with the highest forms of worship.

That strange and unsatisfactory book, *Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism*, declares that any enjoyment of life is absolutely inconsistent with the faith that there is danger of hell fire, and thus makes the cheerfulness of ordinary society an argument against the reality of our Christian faith. This is absolute forgetfulness that we are the ransomed of the LORD, with everlasting joy on our heads; that, our joy in the Resurrection of our LORD, no man can take from us; and that "the joy of the LORD is our strength," and will show itself not only in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but in lightness and gladness of heart, and readiness to please and be pleased with the trifles on our way.

St. Paul's is the perfect rule: "Rejoice in the LORD alway, and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The LORD is at hand."

Alas, it is our want of moderation that is known unto all men. We are most unlike George Herbert's birds, that do but sip and

look up to the better joys above; and thus our joy is not "in the Lord," and has not that restraint which alone can make it safe or innocent. Safe, indeed, nothing is, for ten thousand temptations beset us everywhere; but in itself the pleasure need not be wrong.

Of course there is another way of looking at it, namely, that a penitent sinner has enough to do to keep the strait path in fear and trembling, without seeking after distractions that may lead to thoughtlessness and evil. Some temperaments see the dark side, and are so strict themselves, so earnest in their single aim, that they would restrain all others from what they only look on as waste of time and running into temptation; but these, however it may be for themselves, cause temptation to those under them, by the rebellion, if not hypocrisy, which is sometimes provoked by their intolerance.

Just as play is necessary to children, so play or pleasure of some kind is wholesome for the average human being. In youth, the instinct is so strong, that, unless the spirits have been crushed, some outlet will and must be found—from "the maid's Sunday out" upwards. Happy homes, with varieties of simple diversions, find these recreations naturally; but still there are pleasures enhanced by numbers, and there are duties of friendship and neighbourhood that ought to bring people together. It is a real blessing to a neighbourhood when those who have large rooms, and gardens, and ample means, provide innocent occasions for meeting to those around them, and set the example as to style, time, and manner. Some people there will always be reckless of anything but pleasure and excitement; and if the whole management be left to these, evil will be sure to accrue to the more undecided characters, who may be kept straight by the example and good management of those who can carry a sense of duty into the providing and partaking of amusement.

I am leaving out all that marks these times of amusement with a really dark line of worldliness, namely, the treating them not as occasions of pleasure, but of speculation or ostentation.

What I want to consider is the expedience of ordinary amusements for conscientious though lively girls, with a natural appetite for variety and gaiety. Such girls are to be found, from the fashionable young lady who has seven engagements a day throughout the season, down to the maiden to whom a garden-party at the squire's is a bewildering delight. And the query, where is duty, and where is dissipation, is often equally hard to both.

In both cases, quantity and quality, choice and compulsion, cause and effect, all come into consideration.

The girl who goes where she is taken, delights in the anticipation, and enjoys herself with all her might wherever she is, yet can be quite happy without gaiety, and can resign herself good-humouredly to disappointment, is likely to be pretty safe. So is she whose great aim is to make things pleasant for other people, and help her mother through the representation and hospitality her father's station demands. What is dissipation to the damsel in private life, is to her an almost daily duty, and not at all an unimportant one; for to have the drawing-room of a person high in command, rank, or station, made a place of kindly intelligent refinement, and lively innocent cheerfulness, makes an immense difference to all who revolve about that little centre, and sometimes gives a tone for life.

But the danger begins where there sets in the strong passion for pleasure which bears down opposition, is impatient and weary of all quiet home life, and which so occupies the mind and spirits, that devotion and duty alike are either neglected or perfunctorily performance.

The young lady who drags out her weary or ailing mother, or insists on going with some friend not quite approved as a chaperon, or who over-rules her father's questions as to expense or desirableness, is transgressing those borders of safety that give us a right to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

"Oh, never mind what anyone says—we must have our fun, in spite of old-world fogeys! Mother will like it when she is

there. Father will afford it *somehow*, only he likes to grumble. It is all prejudice and old-fashioned notions. Let me have my swing!"

When a damsel has come to that state of mind, it is only to be hoped that it is a fever, which may pass at the touch of trial. But she will little heed what is here said; so all that it is needful to add is to beg those who are yet in a lucid state to try and keep themselves from such a condition—by not making their own pleasure and amusement the prime object of their lives, and by accepting all the little checks as to health, expense, convenience, or the seasons of the Church, as so many providential means of being guarded against what Bishop Wilson calls "living in such a state as we should fear to die in."

We all know the story of St. Carlo Borromeo, when he was asked what he would do if the last trumpet should sound when he was playing at billiards: "Try to make a good hit," he replied. If the thing be innocent recreation, do it as well as possible, and enjoy it without shame or fear.

On the other hand, "Whatever is not of faith is sin." Indeed, I believe what St. Paul says to the Romans and Corinthians as to heathen feasts is the storehouse of principle for Christians with regard to amusements. Whatever you can simply enjoy without a qualm of conscience, is right; whatever costs you a scruple, is better avoided. A garden-party, if you go against home desires, if you flirt, or if you play unfairly, may become sin to you; an opera or ball may be gone to in perfect innocence.

In dancing as dancing, and in balls in moderation, there is no necessary harm. It is true that fashion chooses the most absurd time for giving balls, partly no doubt for the sake of that feverish excitement which late hours produce; but as this is not likely to be reformed in our time, our young ladies are free to declare there would be no fun if it began early, &c., to enjoy their fairy-land, and unless they be very strong, pay for it the next day. It is better they should have the pleasure than thirst after it as a forbidden but mysterious sweet, and in moderation

it does no harm. If jealousies come in as to partners, dances, good looks, or good dress, that is not the fault of the dancing, but of the world. These are the things to be struggled with. When the grudge once comes in at being surpassed, then it is time to fear.

It does not seem to me that, in right measure, theatres or operas need be shunned by those in whose way they come naturally. Of course there is a choice of pieces, and those on which rests any reproach as to tendency, or the character and language, must be avoided. Some of the great masterpieces ought to be seen and heard in as full perfection as possible; and for everyone's sake the performance should be encouraged. There is no reason against what is merely amusing and pleasureable in moderation, unless experience shows it to have a bad effect on an individual mind. For all these amusements are like articles of food. Most people, even healthy ones, find that some few things are poison to them, though eatable by others. One person cannot eat lobster, another cannot drink tea, &c.; in the same way, the pleasure which is harmless to one mind, may dissipate or excite another. Some music, especially opera music, is found to be bad for certain states of mind. When this is the case, surely the pleasure should be given up. But to most the enjoyment is a safe one, and a delightful study of the real beauty and purpose of the isolated passages already learnt. The other consideration which strongly moves many against these spectacles is the harm they do to the professionals and to the lower grade of persons they attract. This, besides the actual disgust of the sight, is an absolute reason against the ballet; but the other grades of actors and singers in the well-regulated theatres are often beyond all reproach, and take delight in the exposition of the beauty of their parts. Of course it would be doubtful whether a profession involving so much display and simulating of sentiments is always a safe one; but it seems to me that where gifts are bestowed in such manner as they were upon the Kemble family, it is a token of their being intended to serve for the good of man.

There is much more to be said for concert singing, and "Mademoiselle Mori" has shown us how the voice, even in secular music, may be under a dedication to duty and nobleness. So that these enjoyments, whether of the ear or the eye, need not be prohibited.

Races appear to me by far the most questionable of our fashionable amusements; and their tendency has been of late to grow more and more mischievous. It is true that the mere occasion for a drive and a pic-nic-ing luncheon, with the meeting of friends and neighbours, and the mere sight of a crowd of gay dresses, are innocent pleasures in themselves; also, that those who understand horses may be intensely interested; and those who do not, are carried along by feeling for their friends, as well as by the excitement of the multitude. The thud of the advancing horses' feet, the rush, the breathless watch, the sight of the beautiful creatures as they flash along—all these excitements must be felt to be appreciated. The Derby Day is the great London holiday—so delightful to thousands, that it is very hard to condemn it; and yet, is not Frith's great picture a very sentence against it?

Try it every way, and we find that there was a deep parable in the old Greek legend of the mares of Diomedes, who fed on human flesh, and ended by devouring their master. Only a very few men can be much "on the turf" without ruin in property or character. There are a few names, and these mostly of the last generation, that stand high and noble for honour and good influence; but is the good influence they have exerted by any means equal to the evil influence of the being able to cite such names as the sanction for what is avowedly temptation? As to the benefit to the breed of horses, good judges tell us that the racers are not the valuable kind for use; but of this there is no need for an ignoraut person to speak. My argument is with women, and amounts to this—that they have no right to sanction and foster, by their presence, what does such infinite harm.

For the evil to the owners of the horses is a very slight part

of the matter, compared with the frightful betting system. It has created a sort of predatory class, calling themselves gentlemen, and speculating on the folly and blindness of others; and it is the first step in ruin of hundreds of young men, who run into it as a mere act of manliness or fashion, or as a means of proving their interest or enhancing their excitement. How many families have been impoverished, how many hearts have been broken, by the betting father, son, or brother! And this mischief extends even more deeply among the middle classes than among gentlemen, and especially among men-servants. How can any woman encourage the excitement that leads to things like these? How can any woman touch the accursed thing, by betting for pairs of gloves, or the like? If we remember the sacred stewardship that money really is—a talent lent to us to be used with justice and discretion, to do our duty by all around us, and to serve God with—we can never feel it right to stake any of it for the mere pleasure of excitement, or as a support to our opinion, far less to join in what so soon becomes absolute vice.

Nay, there is more behind among the evils attendant on races. Look at the crowds of godless nomads, who wander from one such scene to another, with shows, shooting-galleries, and far less innocent attractions, for the visitors? Can the system be innocent that maintains such a class? Look at the intoxication of the young farmers, shopmen, and clerks, who have spent the day in dissipation, licensed by the example of their betters. Ask any clergyman, whose parish is near any of the more popular race-courses, whether demoralization is not the consequence, and whether there are not boys and girls in the place whose downward course dates from the race day. After that, consider whether you can tempt out the village girl by showing your own gay bonnet in a place where you—in your guarded seat—catch no harm yourself, but where your presence becomes one of the excuses that lead others to evil.

Far be it from me to blame all who attend races in the ignorance that is bliss; but I do say that I cannot understand

anyone promoting them who has once thought over the harm they do to all classes, and for the sake of a pleasure such as in itself can do nobody the slightest good; and I think that all women who have any heed for their neighbour's soul, ought, as races are at present managed, to discourage them to the utmost of their power.

The Rink is a fashion I regret. Skating could only be enjoyed for so short a time, and that so uncertain that it can only be a bright incident and winter pleasure; but our habit of over-doing our pleasure has brought in sham ice and sham skating all the year round, and, as it is often managed, with circumstances not favourable to a quiet, modest tone among the girls who amuse themselves in very mixed company and in an unguarded manner, making themselves a public spectacle. The mischief is not of course the exercise, but that there is no one of any authority to select the company or act as a check—no hosts or hostesses, as there are in a manner with real ice in private grounds,—no one to be accountable; and thus, though a well managed, innocent and select rink is quite possible, "nice" girls would do well to abstain from those where a chance public shares the sport, and in no case should they go without a more real chaperon than a maid or a little sister's governess.

Of one home amusement I would also say something, namely, reading. A good novel is a wholesome thing, full of useful experience, and extending the sympathies; but of nothing more truly may it be said than of novels, that their exclusive use drives the seared taste to slake its fire at foulest wells. And let no one suppose that the reading of evil things is a matter of indifference. Some say that if such things are, they ought to know of them. Can this be so? Can any one know of them safely who has not some duty in trying to prevent them, or rescue those who do them? Is it well to defile the mind wantonly with the mischief? "The knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom;" and to gloat over imaginary pictures of vice, made inevitable and interesting, is no occupation for a Christian woman. How does she know whether they

will not haunt and throng her when she would give worlds to be free of them?

Did not St. Paul speak of "not only doing such things, but taking pleasure in those that do them"? What would he have thought of taking pleasure in the studied delineation of "those who do them"? How can those to whom their Lord spake the blessing to the pure in heart, defile their imaginations with dwelling on sin and shame for absolutely no necessity, but mere emptiness and desire for excitement? Or, "to know what everyone is talking of," is the favourite plea, which simply means, going by the broad road, where many go.

If every modest woman or girl would abstain from such books as poison, and never order, nor even read, one that makes crime and impurity prominent, or tampers with dilemmas about the marriage vow, there would be fewer written and published, less wild-fire would be spread abroad, and the women themselves would have made some effort to "purify themselves, as He is pure."

To conclude. Pleasure is no sin: it is the gay blossom of happiness; and it comes to the young of itself. To provide wholesome pleasure is a duty of those in authority; and in almost all cases, the evil lies not in the amusements, but in the sentiments that they excite, and the inordinate appetite for them, and want of consideration for others, especially servants.

Excitement that makes the evening prayer impossible; Saturday-night fatigue that hinders Sunday morning's feast; fast days of the Church invaded—all these are notes of evil. So is the want of pity that kills ladies' maids by sitting up, or calls up men-servants, after a night of waiting, to take the lady to an early Celebration. So is the passionate determination not to miss a pleasure at any cost, and the disregard of parents' wishes, while an unwilling consent is, Balaam like, wrenched out. And such is the fluttering longing for attention, that feels embittered by being postponed to anyone else.

All these, and many more temptations, turn that blossom, not to happiness, but to deadly poison-fruit.

CHAPTER XVII.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

It seems a truism to say that the first duty is to parents, but in these days the fifth commandment is so much disused that we have need to remember the awful words with which Malachi ended, and which St. John the Baptist took up—"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the parents, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

How many homes do we know where the young people rule, and the old people submit; or if the parents chance to have strong wills, the next thing we hear is that the girl wants to go into a sisterhood "because she can't get on with her mother." Or the daughters are to be met with at every relation's or friend's house for long visits, while the mother is left alone at home. And it is well if the young ladies are not openly taking up causes of which their parents are known to disapprove.

There is no doubt that much of this is the outcome of the parents' disinclination to make themselves respected in early childhood. Liberties have been allowed and laughed at, indulgence has been supposed to secure affection, authority has been laid aside, and there has been no habit of submission. The children have learnt to consider themselves the important creatures in the house, and being entirely educated by strangers, have their minds and opinions cast in different moulds from those of their parents, and when their wills and tastes clash, the young ones see no reason for giving way.

This is often the fault of the original mismanagement, but it is also the temptation of the age. Other young people are seen disregarding their parents, making light of their opinions, and holding home duties cheap; and while the parents fear to be disadvantageously compared with others, the children grow ashamed of their restraints, and make excuses to their companions for submitting. It is to the children that I would now speak,

especially the growing-up girls, and to beg them most earnestly to let filial duty have the foremost place with them. Only the highest duty of all should ever come before it, and that duty should never be treated as an excuse for disobedience in non-essentials. For instance, an absolutely sinful action must not be done even at a parent's bidding; and on the other hand Sacraments and prayers are not to be given up for any mortal's command, but the times and place of these are to be decided by the parents. Yes, even though they seem to be holding their children back from the higher and better part, obedience is still the duty and the rule, and there will be nothing really lost by obedient waiting.

While writing this, I seem to be committing high treason to parents to assume that they are ever foes to the higher course, instead of placing foremost those blessed homes where the father and mother are the guides and leaders, and every nobler and better thought of their children's is lovingly traced back to them; where they hold by the hand as long as the paths lie close together, and give their aid, their blessing, and their sympathy when the children leave the nest. Oh! glad homes, happy lives! where such is the case; where the father's loving, yet sometimes grave and stern authority, can really form the child's thought of his heavenly Father; where the mother watches, loves, and sympathizes so as to be the likeness to her children of the Church; where obedience is willing, honour comes of itself, and discipline is accepted as from indisputable authority; where concealment is unknown, and confidence is free, with the sense that no friend, no adviser, is equal to the parents, and where errors are confessed not from the mere sense of duty, but because the grieved conscience can only find rest in earthly forgiveness. Here the children are the glad helpers, and as they grow older, the first councillors, making a little house of peers in the family plans. Here "Papa" is not only the supreme authority, but the model of all that is good, wise, or noble, the prime hero of his daughters' imagination, and often loved by them (especially) with a deep and passionate enthusiasm; while "Mamma" is

the unquestioned judge and arbitress in all questions of home, the comforter in all griefs or pains, the intercessor in all troubles; one in heart with the girls, and the first of women with her young sons,—whose whole notions of womankind are formed on their mothers and sisters.

Such homes as these do not need what I am saying, for they have their guides. Only I would beg and pray all parents whose children are young, not for present ease or indulgence, sake to waste the mutual blessing of such a home, or to get their children estranged by neglect, or spoilt by indulgence in their early days; and above all to keep themselves loved and respected.

But there are too many who do not come up—not to this ideal—but to this reality—which, thank Heaven, I have seen, and intimately known, again and again. Weakness, neglect, ill judgment, and ill temper, have loosed these bands of love, and the young people feel the disadvantage, and are in difficulties. Sometimes the mother's religious standard is stricter than her daughter's, and yet narrower. This is most apt to be the case when the girl has had little of her mother's influence during her education; but it is inevitable that each generation should have somewhat different views of life from the last; and where there is much difference of age between mother and child, and both are persons with much of the spirit of their time, the discordance is often strong.

The mother crystallised her opinions when she became a busy housewife, the daughter's are those of her time. She despises her mother's quiet meditations and homely charities, as something to which the present world is quite superior. She believes the one to be mere dreaming, the other to be against all rules of political economy; and if Mamma holds by the parish Church, whatever it be, and loves her Prayer-book, and the writers that touched her inmost soul, the daughter seeks the most exciting functions, talks of Catholicity and primitive usage, and has scornful words for simple piety. If the mother is strong and resolute, the girl is a murmuring victim in her own eyes; if

Mamma is weak and gentle, the girl takes her own way, and makes her wretched, unless sometimes the father's authority comes in. And thus it is that the daughters of widows are apt to be the most undutiful, reckless, and extreme in their ways, of all young ladies. Sons of widows, and especially eldest sons, have a sense of protection, which makes them put on manhood early, and become noble and gentle characters in their very boyhood, and the same is often the case with the eldest daughters of widowers, who often take the matron's duties on them with all their might; but widows' daughters are far too apt to show too slight a regard for their mother, and treat her almost as an equal or inferior, while, for want of attention to her hints, they become the laughing-stock and the sorrow of their friends.

There is nothing for it but that the young people should make it their strongest and most decided duty to bow to their parents' will. Long ago St. Paul wrote, "Let them learn first to show piety at home." If the parents will not or cannot enforce it, still the children must pay it of their own accord.

The old question is still true, "What is your religion worth if it do not teach you to honour your parents?"

So far as sons are concerned, after they have taken their place in the world, and founded fresh families, they must often use their own judgment, and when they take Holy Orders they come under our Lord's special call to His ministers to be ready to forsake father or mother for His sake and the Gospel's; but there is no excuse for an unmarried daughter's neglecting her parents' commands—and she must especially beware of fancying that direct call to the ministry, a call to herself to run into a self-chosen way of life.

When the parents, going on the principles held in their youth, shrink from dissipation for their children, and think certain amusements wrong, the daughter's duty is plain, whatever her convictions may be. What is not wrong in itself, becomes wrong *for her* the instant it becomes a matter of wilfulness or

disobedience. If she disobeys, or extorts permission, she can hardly honestly pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

So again with the intellectual training now offered. It may be a prejudice on the parents' part that objects to it, and the girl may feel the deprivation unreasonable and hard; but no examination, no lectures are worth that extorted consent which is tantamount to a prohibition; and quiet, steady home perseverance will be blessed in its stead.

And when neither intellectual training, love of variety, nor even the calls of schools and poor can be attended to without neglecting the comforts and pleasure of elderly parents, the home duty is the prime one. Visiting of rich and poor alike must be given up to this. Girls should not be continually staying with friends, if their family is so small that their absence leaves their mother's day lonesome, their father's evening uncheered.

Respectfulness in word is another great point. Children who have been allowed to call their parents by ridiculous names find it hard to leave off, but it should be made a principle of honour to use the parental name with truly courteous respect, when speaking to or of parents. These tokens form the mind more than we think, and as to wranglings, contradictions, or disputings, such as to an equal would be discourteous, what are they to a parent? Alas! that it should be needful to go over such ground.

Young people may laugh, and ask if we wish to return to the days when the Duke of Somerset said his daughter's undutifulness had broken his heart, because she sat down while he was asleep in his chair, or even to the "sir and ma'am" of our grandfathers. No; but what is the only way to make households happy, or to bring God's blessing on high or low, is that the father and mother should be "loved, honoured, and succoured." It is true that there are bounds to obedience—no child is justified in doing what he knows to be morally wrong at a parent's command, nor in neglecting a direct religious obligation. A daughter's obedience does not compel

her to marry where she does not love, but it does require her not to marry without her parents' consent, even when she has the legal power to do so. Extraordinary tyranny overthrows general rules, and here and there temperaments may be incapable of being at peace together; but in all ordinary cases, though there may be difficulties in implicit obedience, yet it is the certain way of obeying God; and opposition or undutifulness are fatal blots in a Christian character.

They are the peculiar temptation of any age of rapid progress, and in religious matters the difficulty is often increased by the requirements of devotional books, and rules that startle the minds of the elder generation; and it is not quite certain that the reviewers and promoters of these rules always do attend duly to the rights of parents, or think of the burthens laid on the conscience of children. Conscientious, pious parents, should not be spoken of as being in outer darkness, because, though themselves reverent and devout at the Holy Communion, they never heard of early or fasting Communions, and dread them for their child's health.

And in our poor judgment the case seems to be that "obedience is better than sacrifice," and that no Eucharists, no confessions, no prayers can do much for those who are undutiful in their way of seeking them. Non-essentials must give way to obedience, and the difficulty is, where lies the essential.

Patient waiting, and meek obedience, whenever the conscience is not at stake, win the way at last, and bring a blessing, where a struggle would have driven it away. But for most, it is merely a little fret or annoyance, when temper, courtesy, and submission are all that is wanting. And happy is the daughter who thus wins full confidence, who sometimes gains over the parents' hearts from this world, and brings her religious training to help them. Happy is she—even if, while her brothers and sisters have bright homes, she remains the stay and support of her parents' old age, giving to them the best years of her life ungrudgingly. She may be less cared for by the world, but God's love is for the dutiful child. And oh! above all beware of

setting light by father and mother, however superior you may think yourself. To judge by all God's word nothing is more hateful in His sight; and the beginnings of the sin come in idle words, following the fashion of the day in pretending to despise authority, and in selfish neglect of parents' pleasure, and impatience of restraint.

The previous papers have urged to devotion, to charity, to employment; but none of these things, save the actual service to God, are to be weighed in the scale with "piety at home." The girl who will not sacrifice her own pursuits to help or amuse her mother, and who refuses to play, sing, or read the paper to her father because "she is so busy," is beginning a wrong course, however plausible her excuse.

I do not mean that all occupations on which parents do not look with a favourable eye should be given up, unless there is an absolute prohibition.

If there be, obedience is the only course; but if it be a matter of distaste, or want of comprehension, or distrust of novelty, and if the daughter be thoroughly dutiful, acquiescence will generally be granted, if she is perfectly truthful, and yet not obtrusive.

Even when a life seems to be spoilt and made joyless by such obedience, still it is truly earning the blessing beyond this world; but the real truth is that the parents are much oftener the victims than the children. It is they who sacrifice their comfort and happiness, they who submit to neglect, they who are dragged into expense, and endure fatigue, and who, too often, are rewarded with murmurs and disregard.

Girls, ought this to be? Ought we to hear, "O never mind Mamma, she will not care"? Or, "Papa is cross, but I'll have my pleasure!" or mayhap some equivalent in ruder slang, to be heard from the lips of a Christian maiden.

The poet Gray wrote sadly that he had made the discovery that we can have but one mother. We all make it sooner or later, if our lives are of the ordinary length. Oh! do not let the discovery be made among pangs of shame and misery.

Reverence your parents. Do not let your father be looked on merely as purse-bearer, from whom money and consent are to be forced, or your mother as the slave of all your whims, the household drudge, who bears all the cares, makes the contrivances, does what no one else likes, and endures to be domineered over; while you fancy yourself devout, intellectual, or charitable, or gay. Unless you bear your part with them, and make their happiness and good pleasure your prime earthly object so long as you are a daughter at home, all the rest is utter hollowness. Where there are many in family one may be more needful to her parents than the others, but that place *must* be filled by some one, or the daughters are not guiltless.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

Sisters and brothers work on each other in different ways, but very important ones. It depends partly on nursery management, partly on disposition, whether the elder brother starts as the tyrant and tormentor, or the champion and fondler, or whether the elder sister is the little mother, or the noisy, disregarded opposer, or whether the two children nearly of an age are allies or wranglers.

Temper has much to do with it. Boys have generally far more of the animal than the knight about them before they are twelve years old, and their instinct is to feel their power by exercising it on the weak, so that a whining, fretful girl seems to them fair play. The male creature almost always requires to have some pretty return for his kindness, and a little sister who has not the grace to "purr when she is pleased," and cannot be amusing, has not much chance of tenderness from an elder brother; nor is he always sensible of charms in her that delight other people, but thinks her "a little humbug," and feels it a

sort of duty to pay her off in private for the social success he thinks undeserved.

After all, this does not make much difference in the after relations between them, when the one is more manly, and the other has more self-command: it only spoils the recollections of childhood.

There is sure to be a butt in every lively family, on which the others expend their shafts of wit. The qualifications for it are various. Sometimes stupidity is the cause of it, but it quite as often happens that the cleverest and most intellectual of the family takes that post. A certain simplicity or absence of mind, especially coupled with good humour, are the chief qualities in such a target, who is always giving occasion for those family jokes and anecdotes so delightful at home. And if the said butt is not only passive, but reflective, and can laugh at itself, and can return the raillery, it becomes a charming institution, and is often the best loved of all, sure to be mentioned with the fond prefix of "old," or "poor."

A girl is generally the butt, for though brothers and sisters both laugh at sisters, and brothers use their brothers for the purpose, the sister very seldom does so; she has far too much respectful love. If her brother is dull, she is too tender and too much grieved to joke about it, and will feel his failures far too deeply to tease him about them. In fact, she is often his guardian spirit, shielding him—if she be the pet—learning his lesson, and longing to impart to him her own faculty of understanding.

In a family where the sexes are mixed with tolerable equality, all the middle ones find their level according to their powers, and only the eldest and youngest have any special prerogatives of position. The eldest, if a girl, is bound to be helpful and motherly, to be domestic vizier almost as soon as she can speak, and to be an authority in the nursery—her mother's *confidante* and right hand. Often she is much of all this, but therewith come the many trials of the lot. She has to keep order before she has weight to do so, and when her endeavours to be

impressive are received with derision, and peace can only be preserved by sacrifices of her own property. Very little time is left her for her own pleasures and pursuits, and she often has more than half the cares of the family thrown on her. There must always be some one person in a house to whose lot fall the "must be dones," and this is nearly sure to be, if not mamma, the eldest or the second daughter. If the eldest does not take this post, she is nearly sure to be a self-asserting, selfish girl, taking the advantages of her situation without attending to its claims (unless, indeed, health have set her aside). At the same time the helpful girl must not be bustling, rough, or domineering, or her usefulness becomes disagreeable. Unobtrusiveness must accompany her readiness, or she will be officious; and when she has the gift of keeping order, she must exercise it with *real* kindness, or she will lose the love and confidence of the younger ones. A hearty, good-humoured way of putting down a row will do no harm, while "nagging" or airs of superiority alienate. Never lose your temper, and always be ready to be laughed at, or to help; and tolerate whatever is only trying to yourself. If you can do this, you will not be wasting your strength for opposing what ought not to be tolerated, either as flat disobedience to authorities, moral wrong in itself, or as cruel and distressing to invalids, little ones, servants, or animals. Never give way to what is absolutely wrong, but stretch your endurance and sympathy to the utmost rather than lose your brother's heart. And when your power of arresting mischief snaps, the old Horatian rule of not being too lavish of the *Deus ex machinâ* applies to appeals to parents. Never say that if such a thing is done, you will tell, if you ever let yourself be teased, bullied, or worked upon not to perform your threat. Your word *must* be kept, however dreadful to yourself and the victims, and the misery of the thing will hinder you from giving it lightly.

A sister can do much to keep her brother within bounds if she has his thorough love and trust, and can sympathize with him heartily, ministering to all his innocent pleasures as his

willing slave, but standing resolute if there be a spice of evil in them. Never should she favour any disobedience, or connive at anything dishonourable towards her parents; it is doing nothing but harm. Yet it is mischievous as well as hateful to be tale-bearer as to every escapade of a holiday schoolboy, and the right medium seems to be to abstain from all participation in or profit through the escapade, to protest against it, and though not volunteering information, to refuse concealment in case of interrogation, because of the impossibility of a falsehood. To keep up a standard of real honour, above schoolboy honour, is most needful.

In fact, brothers and sisters are designed to help one another. The boy, with his greater and wider experience, and deeper and more thorough way of studying, and manly common sense, is able to see through the sister's little enthusiasms, and to put them to that severe trial, "ridicule, the test of truth." Often it will not be done gently, but it is a very useful crucible. Boys are apt to be jealous of anything that engrosses their sisters to the exclusion of their lordly selves, and to have a strong love of teasing, which inspires banter after they have grown too old for the bodily tortures to which they put their little sisters.

In boyhood, the Tartar is apt to be near the surface without any scratching, and the girl, if sound in health and spirits, can stand it, and thus earn for herself power of endurance, and a certain respect and confidence even from the bullying brother. Not that I am advocating bullying. Parents and authorities should denounce and punish it sternly as cruel and cowardly; but where it is not preventible, I am only trying to show the victims how to make the best of it by good-humoured endurance. If they complain on their own account, their influence is lost; if they endure, there is every hope for them when their tyrant grows into a reasonable being, and for savagery substitutes a certain stern chivalry, insisting on his sister's coming up to his idea of the perfect lady, and generally it is a very reasonable one. He wants to be proud of his sister, and though liking her to be "up to everything" in courage or dexterity, is resolved

that it shall be all in a ladylike way, and is determined to have her refined and well dressed. His criticisms in this way are generally very useful; in fact, whatever nonsenses he may have of his own, he is very clear-sighted as to her nonsenses. Sometimes he is wrong, as when he resents devotional exercises, self-denials, or charities. They had better not be obtruded on him; and a non-essential should be good-naturedly given up to him—*i.e.*, a Communion or a Sunday-morning service, never; but a week-day attendance often had better be left undone rather than not be with him in some amusement, which respect for his sister will render innocent; and even on a Sunday afternoon or evening, it seems to me that when he *will* not be brought to Church, and asks his sister to walk with him or sing to him, she will be better employed in giving him her presence and sympathy than in going to Church, and leaving him to the thoughtless companions whom her presence will keep aloof.

When she is taking mere activity and occupation in religious matters for real religion, he will often, while shocking her by dislike to these doings, be far deeper and more real in his feelings than herself. Very likely, though he goes to fewer services, and likes them much less than she does, it is because he pays a much stronger and more real attention to them, and has a deeper reverence, which, while it is fretted by the gestures, that shock his reserve and seem absurd to him, will not permit him to be present at what he feels he cannot attend or respond to with all his soul. He is, from his training, more thorough than she.

Not for a moment would I acquiesce in the sort of understanding prevalent on the Continent and in some English families, that the women are the religious part of the community, who have to push, pull, and drag their mankind into as much as they will endure for *their* sakes. No, indeed. Ever since the world began the man has been called on to serve God, and no woman should voluntarily enter a house without a religious man at the head of it; and, if born in such a house, her prayers, her example, and her efforts should never cease to endeavour to win those connected with her to God. I am rather

thinking of those homes where the boys and girls have been trained together till school-days, and in their after-times, when on the bounds of youth, the religious habits which are second nature to the girls, seem irksome to the creatures in whom the animal spirits are wilder, and who are impatient alike of restraint or unreality.

Unreality; yes, that is the point. What is humbug and self-deceit in you, the brother will detect, even though it be perfectly unconscious on your own part. If your righteousness have anything of the Pharisee in it, if it is outward ritual alone, without good temper, kindness, dutifulness, and perfect truth, he will see it, and think your faults the faults of your profession. Whereas—though even you be far from perfect—if he perceives that your religious feelings are sincere in making you struggle with your faults, and that they tell on your whole family conduct, then he will respect them and you, and be far more likely to share them, and to adopt your standard of right.

And a high-minded good brother is an unspeakable blessing. Often education throws the men of a family under religious influences far superior to what the girls meet at home. They may meet at school, the University, or in London, with the leading spirits of the Church, and the training of their parents at home may be carried on by more deep and far-reaching instruction. Then their sisters have nothing to do but gladly to reap the benefit of their guidance.

> "Or if before thee in the race
> Urge him with thine advancing tread,"

may be said to them, and the fraternal bond becomes infinitely more close and precious. There are sympathy and help on both sides, and the two draw one another upwards, and work together, share their books and thoughts, and have one hope. Then the sister can throw herself into her brother's projects, and have her mind opened to far more than, left to herself, she would ever have thought of.

These are the truly happy families; such affections are the really deep ones. Natural love goes far; and even for an unworthy brother many a good girl will feel intense affection, helping him with his lessons, shielding him in his scrapes, and sometimes sacrificing her whole life to him. How many maid-servants and governesses have some horse-leech brother, who consumes their savings, and often, when dissipation has ended his days, his children remain to be their charge, I will not say their drag, for often requital and comfort come from them. If self-sacrifice were really a misfortune, the spectacle would be a sad one, but happily it is the glory of their lives. And as long as a man can believe in a good woman, mother, wife, or sister, a cord is near for pulling him out of the mire.

The trial of the sister's love is that in the course of nature, it does not remain the prime love of the entire life. It is everything till youth sets in, and then it is set aside for other loves, and the sister has to take an inferior place; yes, and acquiesce and sympathize when her heart is sore at sense of neglect, and she is tempted to be most jealous and most critical, and cannot believe man or woman to be worthy of her idol.

She must bear it. The more she can divest herself of personal feeling and go along with the new current, the better it will be for her, and she may have a double love, more in quantity, though not the same in quality, to make up for what she loses. But if she shows the least jealousy, or is a hard critic of the new comer, she is making a rift which will widen, and she must always bear in mind that the wife has the paramount right, and that any attempt to meddle with her claims over the brother is treason.

There is less danger in the case of a sister's husband, because women get on more easily with men than women, and because sisters have more common ground even after one is married. The single sister can be the devoted handmaid of the married one, with great benefit to both, and without exciting any jealousies, unless she is more than ordinarily foolish or exacting. Besides, owing to the much-talked-of redundancy of females,

sisters often remain the first with each other through life, lean on one another, suffer and rejoice together, and preserve the same relative position with which they started as soon as their age brought them on such an equality that force of character could assert itself. One remains leader and originator, housekeeper and manager; the other is her complement for life, and the tie is never loosened.

How needful this makes it to beware of evil habits of domineering, wrangling, or showing temper. How often has it been said that some families will behave better to anyone than to those they love best! Family courtesy is almost a test of the honesty of our principles, for where there is least restraint our true selves are shown. Children scream and struggle it out, sulk in a corner, or give a blow; the stronger get their own way, then relent when the weaker suffer. And when they are of larger growth, no scheme, no party can be settled without snarling words, cross innuendoes, whining complaints, till very often the worst tempered gets his or her own way, because of the certainty that only so is there any chance of peace.

In truth, giving up ought to be *taught*, and wrangling put down in such early life that it should seem as impossible as lying or stealing; but many persons are allowed to grow up without such training, and to them I would earnestly say, Make rules of sisterly charity and peace, and treat their transgression as serious sins to be repented of and confessed. Such, I mean, as contradicting elders—yes, or equals—pressing forward your scheme—objecting to or sneering at those of others, being out of temper in your own peculiar fashion, if you do not get exactly the plan or the place you want—making grievances.

Some people have the spirit of objection or contradiction so strongly that they never at first sight like what is proposed. They had better hold their tongues and consider, to find out whether they are in the right, or merely objecting. And when a scheme is on foot, it is hard to have tiresome people intruded, or your special favourites excluded by some contemptuous vote;

or to be put into the wrong boat or carriage; or to be dragged on when you want to sketch or botanise. But if you put self out of the way, you will get a very fair amount of enjoyment after all; and if self is in the way, however cockered, it will spoil all your pleasure. The parable about the uppermost rooms applies as much to pleasure as to pride. Those who may have to live together through life must learn to give up to one another; and even if their course is to be different, how much better it would be to have undimmed recollections of delights enjoyed in common, than of the struggles and the frets accompanying and spoiling all!

The single sister may be the resource of the widowed or disappointed sister, and sometimes the choicest tie, that with the brother, lasts through life. He has perhaps been disappointed, and has come back again to the old *confidante*, who has the home recollections that no one else can share, and who fills up the void as far as any woman can. The tender protection often lasts even when the brother has a home of his own, and the sister nestles in or beside it. It is well for her if she have done nothing to lower or forfeit that blessed love—a love not only for earth, but for Heaven—the love sanctified by our great Elder Brother.

One more thing I would mention in the sisterly relation. The eldest sister is often an excellent mother to the little ones, but rough and peremptory with those nearer to her, unless they happen to fit in with her own character; and they are often unwilling to give way to her. Now, the only way to peace is for seniority to have its rights *most* distinctly acknowledged, and yet to be very forbearing in enforcing them. The younger girls should always own that their elder has the choice and the command, but she should be gracious and willing to yield to their tastes and wishes. When she is made governess, her power should be exactly defined, and she should use it with steadiness; never going beyond it, however provoked. As to this matter of teaching young ones, it seems to me that it would be much better if it were oftener done by elder sisters.

Of course, if they are devoid of good sense and steadiness, they cannot do it: but "Oh, I hate teaching;" "The little ones would not mind me;" "I have no patience;" or the false but sentimental excuse, "Children never love the person who teaches them," are very poor reasons for not returning to one's family the benefits of one's own education. As to the confinement and the regularity, they are exactly what is most useful to the character, and the thoroughness and grounding are what the studies need to deepen them. A girl who will give her mind to teaching, and force herself to patience and good temper, is binding her young sisters closer to her and doing far more good, because the work can be so much more complete, than by running after works outside her house. She must allow no liberties over the lessons while she is acting governess, but after them let her be heartily the sister.

Eldest daughters of a motherless family are often most excellent towards the children when they are little, but find it difficult to perceive when their sisters grow out of childhood and are on an equality, and try them much by unreasonably prolonging their tutelage and keeping them back. It is not exactly jealousy, but a certain pleasure in possessing power and the habit of importance, and they ought to strive against it; while the younger ones should remember that the eldest sister at home must always remain the head, and be deferred to. She is *prima inter pares*, when all are on a level of age, and this ought to be frankly owned on all sides, if for no other reason than to prevent jangles; but let her be most courteous and considerate, and bear her honours meekly. If a younger one surpass her in any attractive quality, she must meet it generously, and take pleasure in her sister's success—yes, even if she seem to be more her father's companion. Rivalry and jealousy are the most terrible of all foes to sisterly love. Let them never be spoken of lightly, or treated as a kind of evidence of fine feelings. They are hateful passions, destructive of all good, and should be prayed and struggled against as belonging to the spirit of Cain.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIPS are very sweet when they have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. Happy the children who have gathered bluebells together in the woods, and confided little plans to each other in almost infancy, discussed their favourite heroes of history, and wandered over life in long scrambling walks or cosy nooks in girlhood, and brushed their hair at night in deeper conversations as they grew older. They may drift apart in after life, but they have a fund of precious recollections, ever green, and a love for one another that nothing can break.

It is quite possible that their original characters may be such that if they had only met in after life they would never have *made* friends; but having begun from mere contact, they go on, and are perhaps more helpful to one another than if they had chosen each other from the first.

Some people do not approve of childish friendships, and think that children of different families only make one another naughty, and that girls gossip folly and write nonsense. I can only say that such mothers can never have had a real child friend of their own. Indeed where sisters are nearly of the same age, and of dispositions that *fit* into one another, they do not want external friends; and large families sometimes cling together and contemn all outsiders as interruptions, if no worse; but this is not universal, and often while one pair of sisters hang together, sufficing one another, and quite inseparable, another girl in the same family is left to solace herself with a friend, and would be forlorn without her.

As long as a mother has her daughter's confidence, and chooses well the families with whom to be intimate, there is no reasonable fear of harm being taught; and as to correspondence, the children may waste time and write nonsense, but no one will ever

write an easy pleasant letter in after life who has not acquired the art of lively use of the pen; and if, as is usual, the letter is the family show, there cannot be harm in it. Still it ought to be the rule that only girl friends should be written to—*not* boys, except brothers. It is much safer both in childhood and later to exclude even cousins. As to the showing of letters, when the child begins to outgrow the triumphant delight of asking every one all round the house to read the great despatch, the wisest way is to live in confidence and honour. The mother should read all interesting portions of the letters she receives to the rest of the family, and the girls will imitate her, and generally bring their letters to her as wanting her sympathy, and having no secrets from her. She can safely tell them that if their friends object to this, they cannot be good friends; but as they grow older, some discretion and consideration become needful. A brother will sometimes confide to a sister what he will not tell his parents; and all hope of good influence would be lost if he knew his letter would be public property. Or a friend may have to tell what it would not be honourable to disclose. Thus after the girl has become formed enough to deserve trust, it should be understood that she has the right to keep back any part of her correspondence that she may choose.

Indeed, some natures are so much more reserved than others, that what seems to one only kind sympathy appears to another offensive curiosity, and they must be dealt with accordingly; though the tendency that some girls have of making friendship consist in whispering secrets about nothing cannot too soon be laughed at and censured.

A mother can and should have her daughter's fullest and deepest confidence, but she cannot be quite instead of a friend to her, because there is a certain equality required in friendship. What the girl wants is not a wise counsellor, but rather a playfellow to share the ebullition of her youthful spirits, and a kindred spirit who can look at the world from the same point of view, with hopes and fears, guesses and fancies, like her own. Her mother has tried it all—it is not new to her; but

the friend sees with the same eyes, and a little bit of experience gained by one in advance is a delightful addition to the stock of common ideas.

Some friendships are drawn close by a sharing of pursuits. Studious and intelligent girls have very happy discussions over their opinions and their favourite characters, and when they have a turn for romance (in its high sense) they live in a world of chivalry. Or who does not recollect the Sunday evenings of comparison of taste in hymns, and puzzles over passages in the *Christian Year?* And when the affection is really valuable, there will be deep and earnest discussions, clearing the mind of difficulties by mutual help, and working out theories or entering on all the questions, trite and vexed to elders, but new to the young. These are the "blissful dreams in secret shared, serene or solemn, gay or bold," that "last in fancy unimpaired," and which are some of our most delightful memories.

Friendship has the highest sanction. Love, as it has been well noted, deepens and intensifies by being exercised on those in immediate contact. It is a mistake to think that shallowness enables it to spread wider, or that the glow is less diffused for being warmest near the centre. He, Whose Love is universal had one friend above all, and gave His human affection to those who were with Him; and His type and forefather after the flesh wins our hearts by that noble and unselfish friendship which has been a proverb through all time.

It has been said that women are less capable of real friendship than men, and certainly historical friendships such as existed between even Greeks of the higher type, do not appear to have been known amongst women; but this is because woman in her degraded state, uneducated, and only her husband's foremost slave, was incapable of more than gossip and rivalry with her fellow-women. Friendship could not begin till woman was refined and elevated, and then her first friendships were with men, such as that of Paula with St. Jerome. It requires that the woman should have a mind and soul going beyond the actual interests of dress, marriage and family, in order to have

substance enough to make a real friendship with man or woman. If she have not, it is in girlhood mere tittering and chattering in a corner; in maidenhood, petty gabble about dress and lovers—often jealous and always foolish; in later life, either scandal or the baby and cook stories that are supposed to prevail over tea-tables. Woman will talk, and talk to her like, but one woman will have a gossip while the other will have a friend.

And it is the early years of youth and character making which decide whether the playfellow shall grow into the friend, and in which fresh companions are gathered, and assimilate into friends, whose origin has still the brightness of the golden age; the link, as Eugéne de Guérin says, may still be of garlands.

These friends are made more by choice than by contact, like those of childhood. Two or three families of cousins or neighbours will pair in and out according to their idiosyncrasies, their likenesses or dissimilarities, finding sympathy for the different needs of their natures. Or a friendship will begin between two widely divided in age, where the fond and devoted allegiance on the one side is all that can be given at the time in return for sympathy, guidance, and assistance often most precious.

It is hardly possible to give advice about making friends. They come, and we become knit together for joy and mutual aid, and also for pain. We cannot give our hearts without giving them for grief. Love must have its passion. When we *really* make friends, we take on ourselves a share of all their perplexities and troubles and sorrows; and unless our affection has grown cold, parting and pain and death must wring one heart or the other.

Thus far it is safe to counsel. Do not be drawn into a friendship by adulation or flattery. If you have any little advantages of wealth or position, and a person disapproved by your family, or your better sense, tries to become a hanger-on by admiration of what nobody else honestly approves, or by fostering what you know to be unadvisable and underhand,

steer clear of her as a tempter. Again, if one less well off than yourself is outspoken and honest in her criticisms of you, and will by no means condone your faults and follies, you may safely trust her as an honourable friend, likely to do you good.

Or, if you be the less well endowed, be careful that you do not deceive yourself as to the attraction on the other side; and take care that you do not suppress your real opinion for the sake of the lift in the pony-carriage, the invitation to the party, or the mere honour of intimacy at the great house. These things sound so mean that it is an insult to be cautioned against them; but there is a certain glamour in the pleasure of intercourse with grandees, and something, too, in the ease of their manner, which *does* sometimes hinder those associated with them from knowing in themselves that toadying temper they would condemn in the abstract. If the world do not come in and spoil it, I do not myself see any harm in what is called an unequal friendship. It is not unequal if the two minds and souls really chime together, and if there is fair giving and taking of counsel on either side—no patronage on the one side, no cringing on the other; and it has this great advantage, that it spares both sides from narrowness by giving the one an insight into the class feelings of the other, and preventing them from being utterly alien to her.

The really unequal friendship is where one side is the "better" in age, in experience, in mental endowments, and then the interchange of sentiments is of infinite value to the inferior in these respects, who seems to have nothing to give but her devotion and her little services, but who really gives the freshness of her unjaded mind, and an opening of the doors of sympathy with the younger generation, while she herself wins the benefit of support and aid in her own difficulties, and assistance in knowing and forming herself such as can hardly be appreciated by those who have not felt it.

Mutual understanding seems to be the ground-work of friendship. Young people are apt to think they have met with such

comprehension on over-slight grounds, and to link themselves together with an eagerness that may slacken. In fact, every friendship has after the very first, a time of proof and trial. After finding where they agree, people have to find out where they disagree, and whether the disagreement be such as to hinder them from the necessary sympathy with each other. Then there is to come the trial of confidence, and whether each side can trust the other, or is worthy of trust. The power of keeping a secret has to be tested. Absolute secrets are not so very many, and it is easy to know what to do about them; but one use of a friendship is to be able to talk over impressions or perplexities that it would not be well to publish; and judgment has to be continually used as to what—without being absolutely sacred—it would be unkind, treacherous, or inexpedient to repeat to some person, though it might not be so to another. Those who cannot exercise such discretions are not fit to be friends, and, though they may be pleasant companions, cannot be more.

Again, a person who is full of frivolity and idleness must be kept in check; and those who actually tempt to disobedience to parents, disregard of principle, or contempt of religion—either in practice, faith, or observances,—should be given up as a duty. If a parent have a strong dislike or disapproval of a daughter's friend, it is a matter of right to give up the intercourse; but girls often get into trouble with brothers by open-mouthed vehemence about friends. The boys have a certain amount of family jealousy and love of teasing, and greatly resent being bored with too much mention of their sister's friend, unless they adopt and engross her themselves to the exclusion of the original proprietor.

As to correspondence, the gift of letter-writing is unequally distributed even among educated people. It is a pain and penance to some and a solace to others. Some in writing to their dearest friend, can only mention the subject in hand; others can pour out facts and opinions, criticisms and comments, making the pen another tongue. It is really as if some nerve

of communication guided the fingers of one, and was utterly wanting in another.

To my mind, letter-writing is too valuable a gift not to be cultivated. A friend who will correspond is three times the friend who can not, or will not; and the value of this bridge over separation is untold. Besides a detailed letter to an invalid, or to one whose home is in a colony, is priceless, and such letters are not to be composed without an apprenticeship;—not of writing model letters, but of correspondence with friends or brothers. A letter describing an interesting scene, or giving a sketch of what is passing, gives not only great pleasure to the receiver, but deepens the impression on the writer's mind, and may even become a valuable record; but the real point is the participation in an enjoyment that it gives those at a distance, perhaps delighting a colonial exile, or making sunshine in a sick-room or a lonely life. A real discussion of right and wrong can often be well carried out on paper, and both sides will have their ideas cleared by thinking them out. Depend upon it, there is selfishness as well as carelessness in neglecting letters. For the infirm, and those who cannot answer, a time should be fixed for a regular letter, and no one can guess how these are looked forward to. Even the smallest home details of flowers, pet animals, children's witticisms, pretty sights in country walks, have their charm and value. Look at the life-long correspondence of Mrs. Grant of Laggan with Mrs. Smith of Jordan-hill, Elizabeth Carter with Catherine Talbot, and see how much pleasure and profit, how much real elements of friendship there is in letter-writing; and do not 'come down to slap-dash notes' and postal-cards.

Life-long friendships! Yes, they are a precious gift—often the dearest tie of single women. Happily they are many. True friends should always mention one another in their prayers, and thus the tie becomes like that of brothers in arms of old. Montalembert dedicated his friendship in early youth with a short prayer and mutual vow and Communion together. We could hardly overtly do this; but surely we do feel that to kneel

together at the Altar may sanctify and make permanent the love in our hearts, bear it above little misunderstandings, restrain us from being mutual temptations, and if death be to part us early, help the one who is taken to be to the other "the pure, calm picture of a blameless friend," and make Paradise seem nearer and more homelike. While, if the two are to run out nearly all the span of their lives, such friendship may be the joy of their lives, their meetings may be holidays, their sympathy and support each other's strength; they may improve one another "as iron sharpeneth iron," and the higher light of the love of God may grow, as Dante says, "as light increases, by flashing back and back again the radiance of the sun from one mirror to another."

CHAPTER XX.

YOUTH AND MAIDEN.

I USE these words because I want some term to express the spirit of that experimental time of life when young people are full of the enjoyment of their mutual attractiveness, and when the whole complexion of their lives depends on the use they make of it, and the effects it produces.

Just as the birds sing in the spring-time, so are young people delightful to one another. There is sometimes the mere enjoyment of lively intercourse; sometimes there is the excitement of a certain amount of preference; sometimes a true, deep friendship is founded; and sometimes the attachment that leads to a union for life then begins.

Friendship can quite exist between persons of different sexes, and of equality in age, but not often, except where there is something that absolutely hinders the friendship from changing into anything else, such as the marriage or engagement of one or both of the friends, or cousinship such as is understood by

both to prevent any closer ties. Old acquaintance from early childhood sometimes forms an almost brotherly link, and there are friendships formed by drawing close together over a grave where lies the nearest alike to both. These friendships are, however, of later life. What I am thinking of are those gladsome days when the youth is enchanted to escape from study or business, desk, ship, college, or barrack, to the bright, graceful, and gracious society of ladies; and when the maiden finds her occupations and pleasures brightened and excited by his participation.

All this may be perfectly free, happy, and innocent, and even beneficial to the whole character and nature, especially when amusement is not the only thing in view, but when deeper and graver thoughts are beneath, and enter into the discussion; but the difficulty is, that there is undoubtedly an excitement in such intercourse, felt more or less by different characters, and apt to produce an unguardedness of manner, and a tendency to say and do what the soberer sense would disapprove.

This capacity of mutual love is of course the cause of the pleasure that it is natural for each sex to take in intercourse with the other, and the curious way in which they regard one another. There is a certain party spirit *en masse* of mankind against womankind, and of women against "the men;" but, individually, men are seldom able to judge a woman impartially, and women are far more lenient to a man than to one of themselves. Neither can one sex live satisfactorily in entire separation from the other; each needs the checks received from the other's presence. Men left to themselves become either morose or coarsely and childishly boisterous; and women in the like condition, are apt to harden, to grow childish, and sometimes unrestrained in their talk and habits.

Not that the system now talked of, of sending boys and girls to the same schools, can ever be a good one. The creatures are at an age when a boy's chivalry is not developed, and it is far more likely to awaken at the sight of ladies as a holiday treat than by competition with them at school. The girls' bloom of

modesty, too, must be endangered by the mixture with the boys, who will sometimes tyrannize, sometimes torment in a way more distressing and hurtful. Nothing but the direst necessity should ever tolerate mixed schools in villages, and, where they cannot be avoided, the boys and girls ought to have different playgrounds. Education will do little if modesty and propriety are not most carefully studied in all the adjuncts.

This is, however, aside from the subject, namely, that which might be called "love in idleness." It is not quite love, it is rather attraction. Some people have it and feel it, and others are entirely devoid of it. Some baby-girls will be excited till every male being in the room has noticed them. Very few damsels fail to enjoy the delightful exchange of badinage, the play of spirits, the wit on either side, the many skirmishes, and the little adventures, together with the attention they receive, all the more if there be any speciality in it, which begins to deepen the current so sparkling above.

The special temptations of this period are very hard to dwell on without seeming either to make too light of them or to treat them too gravely. The very words for them are hard to find. Coquetry was a foreign word borrowed by our refined grandmothers, when they hardly acknowledged that the thing existed at all. Flirtation was whispered by our mothers, as something too vulgar to be freely spoken even in censure, but the word is now freely flung about with an ease likely to make that which it is meant to express seem blameless. The Italians speak of *far la civetta*, that is, of laying one's self out for admiration and attention like the little *civetta* owls which make themselves ridiculous by their airs and graces, on the roofs of houses in Rome.

This Civetta spirit of absorbing everybody's notice and attention, and feeling wronged by their being paid to any one else, is a very dangerous one. It is common to laugh at it, and call it mere youthfulness and feminine nature, but it is really the outcome of vanity, and nearly allied to envy and jealousy. A girl who has been used to a monopoly of attention cannot be supposed

not to feel neglected and mortified if another should receive what has hitherto been paid to her; indeed sometimes she is absolutely wounded by such desertion, but though the vexation is a real one, she must be careful of the feeling it evokes. A temper of bitterness or dislike to the often perfectly unconscious rival, an inclination to detract from her beauty, or her other merits, or to accuse her of forwardness or flirting, show the beginning of a spirit to be fought with. Perhaps it is not possible that she should appear to you as charming as to those whom she draws away from you; and if she be your friend she may almost appear to you a treacherous supplanter; but such opinions had better not be uttered, you can at the very least resolve to say nothing against her, and you will almost certainly be very thankful that you have held your tongue. If she have any undeniable charm beyond you, beauty, wit, musical talent, cleverness or the like, freely own it, suppressing by force all criticisms, and make the prayer against "envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness," more than ever your own. Even if you know yourself her equal or superior, and think her advantages mere frivolous surface matters, her powers so superficial that you cannot guess how people can be taken in by her, doubt yourself doubly, and strive the more to be both fair and kind towards her. Make it a really religious matter to put away all that tends to envy and jealousy.

Another temptation is that which springs of excitement and pleasure, namely, that of losing self-control and going too far. It is to be observed that there is seldom any restraining power on the other side. In almost all men there is a worse part which makes them willing to incite a girl to go as far as she will with them, and which is flattered at the approaches to indiscretion, which all the time make her forfeit their respect. They want to be amused, and think it the girl's business to take care of herself. If she does what they would not tolerate from their sisters, they still lead her on, and though they do not think better of her, they will defend her when her own sex blame her.

Refinement, modesty, and strict obedience are her best safe-

guards here, and again these should guard her against that manner which all women instinctively disapprove, but which many men (even good ones) relish because it entertains them. Nothing is a more unfortunate sign in a woman than that she should be better liked by men than by woman. We shall often hear it said "the women were all against her, because she was handsomer, or better bred, or better born, or better dressed."

No, the women would not have been all against her merely out of jealousy or rivalry, unless there were something objectionable about her. Either she did not bear her advantages meekly, and flaunted them so as to mortify those around her; or else she offended against their good taste and principle. If a woman *is* truly kind, warmhearted, and affectionate towards her female friends, they are quite ready to be proud of her beauty, grace, or other charms; they will love her heartily if she will let herself be loved by them, and will rejoice in all her successes. It is true that they are severer censors than men are, but in general, if a woman may be allowed to say so, they are much better and less prejudiced judges, since the man—if not personally flattered—has at least a secret belief, half-tender, half-contemptuous, that nothing better can be expected of the sex.

The desire to shine in society is not universal. The wish to please is a feeling implanted by nature; but those are the safest and best who simply do as they would be done by, without attempting to produce an effect. It is only a few who can keep around them a court of admirers, and amuse themselves by playing them off one against another. This power is more apt to be derived from sparkle and vivacity, backed by some advantage of wealth or position, than from beauty alone. Great beauty is a very uncommon gift, and the regularity of feature that constitutes it is not often compatible with quick sensitiveness or great intellect; and transcendent beauties are thus generally tranquil beings, not very easily stirred, and often perfectly simple, and much less desirous to attract than those whose good looks are a more uncertain matter. The great majority of Englishwomen are fair enough to be beautiful in

loving eyes, and to have a good deal of prettiness dependent on health, expression, or becoming dress, and there is much more inclination to think about the matter in such cases than in those whose beauty is an acknowledged fact. In the paper on dress, I think it was said that due attention to whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, should make a woman in home and family life wear what is modestly becoming and gives pleasure to her friends; but the instant she begins to dress with the purpose of attracting notice, or outshining others, she errs. Over-plainness of attire, with the set purpose of mortifying her own vanity, is a much better extreme—though that has also its subtle dangers.

The girl whose effort it is to excite admiration or sentiment, that may bind one or more men to her service as slaves, and she who is continually putting on caprices, or expressing imperious wants, that they may be occupied with her, and who has no serious feeling for them all the time, but is merely playing with them, are both making an evil use of their womanhood, and of their powers of pleasing. One danger in the matter is the habit they are forming. They fancy that when they are married, all such flirtations will drop off of themselves. Such is sometimes the case, but not always. The habit of receiving homage and exciting admiration, and the enjoyment of creating a kind of excitement by the appearance of preference, have so ingrained themselves that there is no laying them aside, they recur with company manners, and lower the married woman far more than even the girl—disturb family peace—lead her to the verge of evil.

Equally weak and contemptible is the girl who is always imagining love either to or from herself. "Thinking about lovers," is universally acknowledged to be a foolish pastime, and though a real contemplation of the subject of love and courtship is needful at times, and when such a matter really comes on, the discussion with sister or friend is quite right and natural; nothing ought to be more avoided than a conclave of silly girls, dwelling on "their conquests" real or imaginary,

expressing hopes, fears, or despairs, and teasing one another about neglects, or flattering each other with repetitions of admiration. It is to be hoped that good education and better kinds of occupations are raising girls out of this depth of folly, but it is well to utter a word of warning, since the pleasure of talking of oneself is always apt to betray one, and there is a certain importance in being supposed to have a lover.

But it should be remembered that grave evils often come from girls, true, right-minded, religious, and charitable, and as nice and good as possible in feminine company, giving way to the temptation of making young men their slaves or playfellows. When such young men are the curates of the parish, these habits are very mischievous to the work of their calling. Their heads are turned, their time taken up with amusements and chatter, the charitable occupations that ought to have been properly divided are slurred or neglected, or made occasions of absolute bad example, and even church decoration becomes irreverent. Curates and young ladies have become an absolute stock subject of mockery, and though it is quite true that both are apt to be at an inflammable age, and that human nature is human nature, and that something more real and earnest may be springing up, unguarded folly and excitement is not the way to a blessing, and the girl who enjoys "turning the head" of a curate, as fair game, does not consider that in her thoughtless levity she may be marring a priest of God. "He that despiseth you despiseth Me," is a saying that very few bear in mind in their dealings with clergymen.

But it will be asked, What is to be done? Is a girl to be stiff, prudish, and affected in her relations with men, as if she were afraid of them, and always expecting to be carried too far? No, indeed. That is only another form of the same complaint. Frank, yet quiet, easy manners are the right medium, guarded by the instinct of modesty and propriety, and especially avoiding any putting forth of feelers by way of experiments in power, or the giving such commands to men, young or old, as presuppose a certain devotion to her service.

The whole question how to avoid flirtation, without undue stiffness, resolves itself into old primary rules. To set a watch before the lips, and to examine oneself daily, is the rule laid before every Christian. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain," is quite as true of woman as of man.

If from the time of first serious thought a careful watch has been set to say no word to small or great, young or old, that has not some kind, true, or faithful end in view, if an account is kept of every swerving from these rules, of every lapse into thoughtlessness, negligence, vanity, irreverence, or the like, then without affectation, or unkindness, the maiden will preserve herself, or be preserved by heavenly Grace, from the vulgar coarseness of flirtations and coquetries, and be ready in all fair inward purity of spirit, as well as outward purity of body, to give herself in the full dignity of her maidenhood to him whom she really and worthily loves. Or else, she will have a truly virginal spirit, not a merely baulked and disappointed one, to turn withal to be the unmarried woman, who careth for the things of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXI.

COURTSHIP.

It is a curious thing to observe how late in development was the higher love of woman for man previous to marriage. Only after centuries of generations nurtured in Christianity did she become fit to choose for herself, and thus there is less absolute direction in Holy Scripture on this matter than on almost any other. The daughter was so entirely the parent's chattel that she had no will in the matter, and was disposed of, while a mere child, incapable of a real choice.

Rebekah, indeed, was allowed to decide, but about one unknown to her, and though Jacob might love, Leah and Rachel were alike passively bestowed on him. If we accept the part of the Bride in the Canticles as literal, it is still the love of one already betrothed, not choosing for herself.

The counsel is to the father when the son of Sirach says: "Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter, but give her to a man of understanding;" and when St. Paul speaks of the expediency or non-expediency of marriage, it is to the fathers that he speaks, not the virgins themselves. And if this were so in the Israelite world, far less is the high and pure type of love to be found in heathen literature or history. Greek and Roman girls were bestowed in marriage by their parents, and often made tender and noble wives, but they would never have thought of making a choice. Perhaps the nearest likeness to modern love is in the graceful story of Penelope, covering her face with her veil, and turning to Ulysses when her old father asked her weeping, whether she would leave him. There have always been good wives, and also men who loved maidens, but maidens had little opportunity of loving in return, and, if they did, it was reckoned as indecorous.

It is a great mistake to hang a tale of the Early Church upon a modern love story. The Christian maiden, if destined for a wife, was given away too early to have a real choice, and the feeling we now call enthusiasm or romance, generally aspired to a life of dedicated virginity, as something far nobler than marriage. Legend tells us of virgin martyrs wooed by heathen youths, but never of any inclination on the maidens' part to heathen or Christian man. But these very virgin martyrs did much to raise the ideal of woman, and together with the homage paid to the purity of the Blessed Mother, began to alter the position of the whole sex, and the northern nations bringing with them strong, brave, devoted women, never except in Spain, subjected them to eastern seclusion. Romance arose, but most of its glorification of love was, it is necessary to avow, not of that pure and refined love that leads to marriage. The damsel

was still given away by her parents with no volition of her own, and even, when left early a widow, was scarcely ever at her own disposal; and found no safety but in marriage or a convent.

The loves of the earliest genuine romance are of Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristram and Yseulte, Orlando and Angelica. The courts of love in Provence were to decide on the cases of fantastic adoration between knights and ladies; the latter always married, for no one had seen or heard of them previously. The true Provençal histories are divided between the absurd and the horrible. On the one hand there is the history of the troubadour who languished and died for love of a lady he had never seen; on the other, the tragedy of the husband who served up the heart of his wife's lover to her, upon which she vowed that food less noble should never pass her lips, and starved herself to death. Both are given as facts by Sismondi.

It seems as if a good woman could not help or prevent this troubadour devotion; and Blanche of Castile used that of Thibault of Champagne for political purposes, but the right-minded woman in general would ignore it completely, and would have been shocked at the notion of falling in love as a maiden, or choosing her husband. She vowed love to him together with obedience at her wedding, and in a true and pure heart the love was providentially always brought, even though the man might be utterly unworthy of it. Novels made out of mediæval love-stories, like those of our own time, are mere anachronisms. Ivanhoe might love Rowena, but Rowena would have been given to him or to Athelstane long before his evasion. The wardship and marriage of the young heir as well as the heiress was the perquisite of the guardian, and was granted by the king to some favoured noble, who either sold the child's hand, or gave it to one of his own family.

Dante and Petrarch, by making glorious ideals of Beatrice and Laura, did much to purify the sentiment of "minstrel love," and it began to grow into a more innocent and refined feeling of distant adoration as it is seen in Surrey and Sidney, while

neither thought of Geraldine, nor of Penelope Rich, as possible wives, only as sources of poetical inspiration.

In the meantime, however, mutual liking had obtained some recognition as a ground of marriage. Two children of Edward III., successfully, and by dint of constancy, accomplished love-matches. Anne of Brittany, and Jeanne of Navarre, heiresses though they were, successfully resisted distasteful suitors; yet, on the other hand, the intense prosaicalness of common life is shown in the Paston letters, where the girls pray for husbands, with apparently perfect indifference as to who they may be, and the family history bears no traces of anything like a courtship from personal affection. What we call the days of romance were the most devoid of it in marriage. Yet the *Morte d'Arthur* was a great advance upon the continental tales of the same kind. Its blighted and repentant Lancelot would never have perverted Francesca da Rimini; and in literature, in England at least, a tone of innocent romance began to set in, immensely aided by Shakespeare, who, considering the almost universal example of romance, deserves infinite honour for never enlisting sympathy on the side of any but pure and innocent love. *Romeo and Juliet* is, however, probably the earliest of novels which treats love from a modern point of view. Its date as an Italian novel is before the end of the fifteenth century, and the main incidents are said to be true, the Capelletti and Montagudi being real Veronese families, and the monument still remaining. The point in it is, that though disobedient, passionate, and culminating in suicide, still the love is free from the stains to be found in ordinary ballad and romantic literature, and Shakespeare, by endowing the story with all his own graces, no doubt did much to excite sympathy with lovers, and make parents dread the effects of crossing them tyrannically. In fact, in the Elizabethan age, the real and ideal were blending. People were no longer contented that their imagination and their sense of duty should lie in entirely separate worlds; they acknowledged the power of love, and sought to purify and make it innocent. Lucy Apsley's account

of her own feelings for Colonel Hutchinson is a beautiful picture of maidenly love, but for the most part the power of choice was in inverse ratio to the value of the lady's hand; and as to its being a sin to marry without being in love, no one dreamt of such a thing. What would the judicious Hooker have said if it had been suggested to him that he did wrong in marrying Joan without such a puerile preliminary? No; marriage was a business transaction; the code was, as it is in France at this moment, that the parents knew much better than their children what was good for them, and though they were gradually becoming convinced that to oppose a violent aversion, or thwart a strong attachment, might have very mischievous results, yet the girl was thought to be best and safest who exercised the least volition in the matter. Up to the reigns of the House of Hanover this seems to have been the universal way of thinking among the higher ranks, and among all who had anything to bestow with their daughters.

Perhaps Richardson did the most to overthrow the whole system by bringing a tyrant father into universal detestation in one novel, and in another giving what was at the time taken as a picture of noble and respectful mutual love; and though we now laugh at the formality and stiffness of Sir Charles Grandison, and the sentimental confidences of Harriet, still theirs was a high-minded refined love for what was best and greatest in one another, and it no doubt did much to convince the world that this was the right way of bringing about a marriage.

Physical force on the parents' part to make a girl accept their favourite suitor had become impossible. Moral force and tacit persecution still were in their power, then, as now, but public opinion was going further and further away from all exertion of it, and before the end of the eighteenth century, the absence of the practice of *mariages de convenance* would have been reckoned as one of the honours of England, at least by her own children, for a French or Italian woman would deem the freedom at once perilous and improper.

It is said, with what truth we know not, that the proportion of happy marriages is about equal in either case, and the risk of a wrong choice is less in the experienced parents than in the girl herself. This, however, leaves out of sight that worldly considerations are stronger in the old than in the young. The reply again is that the maiden's freshness is spoilt if she have to take these same matters of worldly prudence into account, and that she is more simple and charming if her parents have judged for her. But in the main there can be no doubt that where she is allowed to grow to her full power of judgment, and left free to choose for herself, there is much less risk of the horrible chance that her husband may be a person not easy to love, and that she may see the man she could have been happy with too late. This, as we all know, has always been the bane and scandal of France; where flirtation *after* marriage has met with the same toleration as with us flirtation does *before*. There must of course be this essential difference, that the maiden's flirtation may always be the beginning of a genuine attachment, while that of the matron cannot be wholesome, and scarcely can be innocent.

Flirtation even here is, however, not the right beginning. The spark of true love is so sacred a fire, that it should not be fanned by folly and rattle. There is no reason that playful mirth should not be excited around love and lovers, but there should be something deeper below.

There are many mistaken ways of treating the matter. In one the mother says, "I wish my daughter never to think of love and nonsense," and hushes her about it, so that when her natural curiosity about woman's destiny awakens, she is left to pick up her notions, either from novelettes, or from girls like herself. In dealing with village girls, this kind of mistake is made by the best-intentioned people, who will not read them a story with any mention of lovers in it, either because it is thought an improper subject, or because they giggle and titter at the mention, and thus the chance is lost of raising and refining their notions on the matter.

Another, and a worse error, is the continual discussion of possible symptoms, and the perpetual family joke of ascribing suitors to one another, and teasing about them. And worst of all is the speaking of a wealthy match, as if it must needs be a good one for that reason, and a magnificent achievement of the family. In truth, what is due to the young maiden on whose choice rests the whole colour of her future life, is to bring her up to the knowledge that Providence will decide for her whether she shall be married or single, will fix, in fact, "the state of life to which it shall please God to call her." That call, in our present state of society, is given through mutual love and eligible circumstances, and this truly seems by far the most suitable way. But the whole knowledge of the responsibility of such choice and the duties it involves ought not to be left to the agitated period of courtship, or as it sometimes actually is, to the wedding-day. Brides have been known to say that they had no notion how solemn a service was that of Holy Matrimony till they actually were going through it, at the conclusion of all the whirl of preparation, fine clothes, and all the inevitable (?) adjuncts of a wedding.

Sensible observations on books and on real life ought to be so contrived as to show young people the spirit of these lines of the Rev. Isaac Williams :—

"'Twas God Himself to Adam brought
His own appointed bride,
And by Himself the gift that wrought
The gift was sanctified.

"And for his son, when Abraham sent
To seek the destined maid,
God's angel watch before him went,
And all their path arrayed.

"An angel at Tobias' side
By Tigris' banks is bound,
An unknown yet protecting guide
To Sara hath been found.

"I deem that these, and such as these,
Unknown to sight or sense,
Do speak in marriage destinies
Unwonted providence.

"A special guiding beyond all
Mysteriously attends
By Him who makes the secret call
And hallows all the ends.

"And, therefore, those I deem unwise,
Fond tales of earthly love,
Which seem to trifle with the ties
Hid in God's Hand above.

"Of patient fear we need far more,
And more of faith's repose,
Of looking more to God before,
Till He His will disclose.

"Far, better far, than passion's glow,
Or aught of worldly choice,
To listen His own will to know,
And listening hear His Voice."

Love there *must* be. A marriage of obedience, without previous love, was no sin in the maiden of former times, nor is it so in some countries now, but in the English girl it is a sin; for to her "to *love*, honour, and obey" means so much more than it did to her ancestress, that the words cannot be honestly uttered without a real present sense of love and honour.

Secondly, it is not right to represent love as a lawless, in fact, sensual passion, excited by mere chance, and entirely unconnected with esteem. It might be so in the untaught woman, with the more violent passions of southern climates. It is not so in the average woman of the north. She has discrimination and control of herself, and she can learn that there are some whom she ought not to love. Let me add, that those tales which treat of the marriage of first-cousins as simple and unobjectionable do no kindness. It is not easy to put before

young girls why it should not be, but it seems to me misplaced delicacy, which forbids them being told that though there is no doubt a proportion of healthy families born of first-cousins, yet that long experience has gone to show that hereditary diseases are intensified in the children, and that idiotcy, insanity, and defective organization are so often the result, that it is most undesirable, if not wrong, to run the risk of producing such offspring. To marry in the full knowledge of these facts is not trusting God, but tempting God. Fathers and mothers know them, and forbid. Young people cannot understand why, point to the instances among their friends, and those with which novels unfortunately provide them, and try to wear out opposition. It is very destructive of peace, for the intercourse between cousins is so pleasant, that it almost naturally leads to something warmer, and however much each side may be certain of the disapproval of the parents, the examples they see before them make them still hope on, till either there is a broken heart or an extorted sanction. They ought to be taught the real grounds of objection, and that where Heaven has entailed such consequences, His Will is manifest, and that their parents are therefore inexorable. This would not be a remedy in all cases, but it would be a preventive in a great many.

Reasoning about love is very difficult, because it varies so much; but I believe it is a rule that pure and noble love must have begun in esteem, at least on the woman's side. Men know so little in reality of women, and credit them with so much, that they are ready to fall in love with mere beauty, fancying that the fair face must be the index to every perfection. But woman's affection is generally much more independent of mere externals. *If* she can honestly believe *him* to be the most perfect specimen of manly beauty in the universe, it is an additional pleasure to her, and she thinks better of handsome men on his account; but it is not his physical beauty that has won her heart. Either it is his loving her, or else it is some high or supposed high quality on his part.

There is a love, very deep and true, that sometimes has been excited by one known in early youth, before he proved himself unworthy ; and there are hearts which, when thus given, can never be taken away again, but love on in sadness, distinguishing between the sinner and the sin. Such love is faithful and tender, and as long as it does not love the sin as well as the sinner it is ennobling ; but if it excuses or defends the error, it pulls down the woman from the standard to which at length she might yet raise him.

But love to one who is not worthy of it in the first instance is beneath a woman of right mind, and happily not common. Mr. Trollope has represented his Emily Hotspur as dying of love for the good-for-nothing cousin, whom she first met with the perfect knowledge of his being a scamp, and with no subject in common but horses. It is an insult to womanhood to represent such things as possible, and I do not think they are. Good girls may be deceived, may have illusions, but they are not attracted by what is essentially base, mean, and dissipated.

The sweet moment of the discovery of loving and being loved comes, and therewith the trials. Parents may not see as many perfections in the lover as the young lady herself, and may hesitate to entrust her to him ; or there may be considerations of prudence, which render them unwilling to give a free consent ; or there may be objections on the part of the gentleman's family. In all these cases, there is nothing for it but patience and obedience. Take the first case. The father has far better means of knowing the truth as to the man's character than the girl herself can have. What may seem to her horribly unjust and prejudiced may be the sad truth, and to persist in an engagement in the teeth of such opposition is flat disobedience. Nobody can deprive her of the power of loving and praying for him ; but if the opinion of him be ill-founded, he will prove it so in time ; and if his affection be worth having, he will return to her. If he were really unworthy, there will be reason for thankfulness that submission has saved her from unhappiness far worse than her youthful disappointment, though it may not

so seem to her at the time. She may suppose that if she were permitted to see, or write, or be engaged to him, she could save him; but let her remember that, however prejudiced her parents may be, or may seem to her, disobedience is evil, and she has no right to do evil that good may come. No good will come if she is overcome of evil. She must overcome evil with good.

So, also, when there is the question of discrepancy of faith. A Church-woman ought not to suffer herself to become attached to a man outside her own Church. If he be in earnest in his religion, he cannot but try to bring her over to him; if he be not, she ought not to marry him at all. In the heyday of youth and life religious differences seem of no great moment, when, as people say, their hearts are right, and their hopes the same; but when trouble or any stringency of life comes, then the difference of the foundations becomes pain and grief, and the most pious of the two will absorb the other.

And as to the more common trial, alas! of the present day, that of finding the man a sceptic, yet talking of being so unwillingly, and still unblemished in character. Then St. Paul speaks plainly about the being yoked with unbelievers. The believing wife, who may sanctify her husband, is one already married before her own conversion; but no woman has a right to marry a man who, in the pride of intellect or out of mere imitation, has thrown away the faith once delivered to the saints. He may say that he respects her faith, but his contempt for it as fit for women acts on her. Much better that hearts should break than the sin be done, and mayhap her martyrdom of steadfastness is the surest way to his conviction.

The case is harder when the objection is on the ground of insufficient means. There is so much to be said about not looking forward, and the present misery is so great, that it is not easy to believe that those who inflict it do so from the desire to prevent greater distress in future; but, here again, obedience must be the principle, and those not under the glamour of actual love cannot fail to see that to bind upon a man the weight of a family he can barely support and cannot educate, is often the destruction of

his health, spirits, and efficiency. The girl may fancy that she will be his help and not his hindrance, but she cannot answer for her own health and strength. The place where his business lies may disagree with her, and all her best designs and youthful energy may fade into querulous slovenliness, under the depressing influence of constant ailments. She will see her husband haggard, worn, and altered, and feel incapable of cheering him.

This is what her father and mother see before her, and dread, while she is thinking them cruel and worldly, and wishing she could reduce them to reason by a little bad health; nay, sometimes contriving actually to do so, by pining and fretting herself ill.

But am I defending worldliness, or wishing no one to marry into poverty? By no means; but I do not think that such marriages ought to be made very early, and without full trial of the affection that prompts them.

It is a strange thing to say, but experience proves it, that nothing is so uncertain as constancy. *Primâ facie* we should say, that to "love one and love no more," and never to swerve from the first serious attachment of a life, was the part of the finest and greatest characters; but real life does not show that it is always so. Some natures recover, and open to a new affection after being thwarted and separated from the first; others never cease to retain the first treasure of their hearts, and can be happy with no one else.

Now if the love be of this kind, it will bear waiting till industry shall enable a sufficient provision to be made to prevent actual living from hand to mouth on the gains of the bread-winner, so that any breakdown on his part must lead to distress. If the man cannot, while single, exercise self-command enough to do this, he certainly is not fit to trust a wife to. Professional men ought to make such saving, and, in these days of employment for women, it might be possible for the lady to work on her side for some years. And in the case of clergymen, it is an absolute duty to the Church not to burthen her revenues with

the support of wives and children. A clergyman who marries without a private fortune may have to saddle his clerical income with much that it was not intended for; and if he be the incumbent of a poor living, or a curate, he brings his profession into contempt, and cripples his charities. A girl who likes to visit cottages, train the choir, and teach at school, is said to be cut out for a clergyman's wife; but if she marry on an income too small to provide servants to look after her household and children, she will have no time to assist her husband in his parish cares, and no alms to bestow; nay, she and her family are themselves consuming what the Church provides in order that her priest may be her almoner. "A good living" ought not to be looked on simply as a good thing to marry on, but as a means of doing a great deal for our Lord in His Church. Private means alone give a right to a marriage with a clergyman; and if an affection springs up, and an engagement ensues, the lady, as the lay party, ought to work, save, or inherit enough for a provision before she marries. Of course, no one thinks that celibacy ought to be the rule, or that a clergyman's wife and family are not often a great blessing to a parish; indeed, the clergyman's sons, who are to be found in every profession, are one great means of keeping up a good understanding between clergy and laity, rich and poor. But this benefit can seldom come when on one side or the other there are not means to bring up a family without such support from the benefice as renders it either totally dependent on the father's life, or during his life, obliges him so entirely to apply to his parishioners for all needs of Church, school, or charity, that it almost amounts to the voluntary system. The laity should for their own sake supply such needs, but for every reason, the clergyman should be able to do without them.

The Greek clergy must, indeed, marry, and their families are provided for; but their social status is like that of a Scottish or German minister, and no one could bear to see our clergy no more influential than these last. "They who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel;" but this can hardly be stretched to

mean the superior education and general ease and liberality with which a clergyman must live if he is to have his mind free for his duties, and be respected. Debt, the need of pupils, want of freedom to act, or even to aid, lie in wait for the clergyman who has overburthened himself with family cares; and this should be borne in mind by the young girls who think it a grand unworldly and pious thing to engage themselves to clergymen without a hope of any inheritance on either side, and with the remote chance of living.

This sounds hard-hearted; but it must be remembered that the position of most clergymen in England makes them marry into a class which cannot well dispense with comforts and luxuries, and that stern severe poverty in a single man does not impede usefulness nor diminish respect; but that they do so in a married man. A shabby wife—poor little Mrs.———, whom everybody pities and patronizes—is no benefit to the Church.

But this is not saying that people had not much better marry when they have all human security of provision to fall back on in case of need. It is very good for them to begin poor, and to dispense with display, and some merely conventional wants. If they have affection enough to do this and be happy in it, then they may well marry with brave heart and hope.

How much ought to be secure, I will not say, because everything is relative. "I waited till I had two pigs in my sty, and then I knew I was a match for any woman," said an old cottager; and the foresight and self-denial which enabled him to start with the two pigs are the real essentials, without which none can prosper.

Long engagements then, with patient steady diligence and hope at the end, do not seem to me to be deprecated, but rather to be good for both parties, who can lean on each other's characters while working and waiting for one another. Nor need the man do all the working and the woman all the waiting, according to the traditional fashion, in which she has nothing to do but to be resigned, and pine and be a faded old rag by the time he is ready for her. This is what parents fear when they say they do not approve of long engagements, but there is no

reason why the daughter should pine. She will probably not earn money (though in some cases she might do so), but she can surely find some occupation which will prepare her for being of use as a wife, whether in domestic economy, or in cultivating some art or other pursuit likely to be congenial to her future husband. Moments of weariness and sickness of heart will certainly come, but in general a cheerful resolution, strong faithful trust, and sustained activity will bear the spirits through.

Trust there must be. Love without trust is no love at all, and there should be a stout resolution taken against frets, jealousies, and exactingness. The old Latin Grammar proverb that the ire of lovers is the re-integration of love, is a dangerous one, for if true once, each successive re-integration will be slighter and slighter. In fact, most of the stock sayings about lovers are founded on the uncertain, wayward, petulant creature that the "very woman" was before she was educated and self-restrained. The caresses, and squabbles, and reconciliations here meant are like those of a couple of children always quarrelling yet who cannot play apart, not those of beings in earnest. Fretful complaints of supposed neglect—nay, of real neglect—are not the way to keep affection.

One proverb is indeed eminently and exceptionally true, namely, that on Love's blindness. Some time or other, either before or after marriage, part at least of the dimness will be removed, and the parties will have to perceive that they must make the best of one another, instead of finding absolute and adoring perfection, ready to have only one will between them.

Now, a real engagement, though not ratified as betrothal, ought to be a sort of marriage of the spirits, the gaining to each of the "angel friend to share in everlasting rest," and therefore the entering on it should not be lightly made, far less should it be lightly abandoned. That it is not irrevocable is indeed well, since there may be cases where the comprehension of each other was imperfect, or where some unhappy change has come over one or other, and to persist would be the greater evil; but even

then there is a broken pledge, and the one who is disloyal has much to answer for. Once engaged, a girl has need to take care that her spirits and love of notice do not betray her into looks and words disloyal to her lover and unfair to other men. She may be secure in her own heartfelt allegiance to him, but to toy with it is not only unsafe but wrong.

Why do I say these things? Everybody knows them, everybody finds fault with those who do them, and yet when the trial comes, girls do them, and laugh off the censure, and throw away—I will not say their happiness—but the true glory of fidelity.

One more thought. When a man gives a woman his love in full earnest, thenceforth her personal qualities are so much positive or negative quantity added to his own. If the motto of both alike be

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more,"

the woman will be even here in her own way her lover's Beatrice, raising and lighting him with her own spiritual nature, and purifying the current of earthly love with the Water of Life itself.

> "For surely they are most in love
> Who love but only Thee.
> Or if upon earth's darksome breast
> They find some spirit rare,
> Which, bright and true beyond the rest,
> Gives back Thine Image fair;
> With thankful, not adoring gaze,
> 'Tis theirs to look and muse,
> How glorious the meridian blaze
> If such the twilight hues."

Happy are hearts linked together "in Christ," with His honour and glory ruling over their love for one another. They are safe; whatever storms may blow over them, theirs is emphatically true love, refining and ennobling each.

The strong man will make all sacrifices to the right with a freer and more gladsome spirit, if she whom he loves goes along with him, and cheers him to the effort, yea, even if it be one which keeps them apart; but if she weeps over what he thinks his duty, tries to find reasons why he may do otherwise, thinks his sacrifice almost an unkindness to herself, she may perchance break his resolution and draw him down to her own level; or if he be too strong for this, she will send him forth on his way wounded and sore with resistance.

Since vanity and worldliness, or weary affectionate impatience for their union, may turn the scale in some decision on some situation of doubtful good, or lead to questionable means to secure promotion, in such matters nothing is so important as that her eyes should be clear, her heart true and faithful, as a course of endless evil may be begun, the wreck of a whole lifetime.

Yes, from the moment a man puts his heart into the hands of a woman she has the responsibility of his life. She should try her utmost to keep her thoughts in a different region from the conventionalities that surround lovers, and which are only innocent when they are the mere outward sport of happiness, not interfering with the deeper, loftier, more solemn thoughts.

The flutter of excitement and importance, the presents, the wardrobe, the dress, the bridesmaids, are so much brought forward in these days, that there is often a risk of greater things being forgotten. It is true that marriage is a joyful rite, and an emblem of a great and joyful mystery, and a wedding is looked on as an occasion for gratifying all manner of friends and relations on either side, who would be hurt if there were not a great display.

For whose happiness are all the expense and turmoil it is hard to say. Certainly not for the bridegroom's, who only, wishes he could go through it under chloroform, and has had besides to present out of means which sometimes can ill afford it, an unmeaning gardener's bouquet, and an expensive present

to ten or twelve girls he neither knows nor cares about, and some of whom are only chosen to make up the pairs, and that their dress may serve as a milliner's advertisement in the country papers. Nor can it be much pleasure to the bride's mother to be contriving for a breakfast beyond the capacities of house or servants. While as to many of the guests they have felt it a heavy tax to have to make a present, not out of love, but because it is expected of them, and not with a view to use or appropriateness, but to the figure it will cut in the trophy of presents erected on a side-table to be enumerated in the county paper by the reporter. And where the name is well known, family affection cannot make a simple gift without being stuck up, enumerated, and commented on perhaps through a whole series of newspapers. There is a general misery about speeches, and much fulsome folly talked. The bride's good-byes are interrupted by the necessity of exhibiting her to gossipping friends, and she drives away amid the old shoes, which, if they have any meaning at all, have a heathen meaning. Everybody wanders about disconsolately, wishing to get away. They tell the mother it is a very pretty wedding, but they agree afterwards that nothing is so dull. Who is the happier? Perhaps the youngest guests, and certainly the little nursemaids and idle boys who crowd into church after the procession, so that the service is interspersed with infantine murmurs. And the readers of the county paper have a few idle moments amused by the technicalities of the report, which tells every dress like a fashion-book (I have even seen "washing silks" particularised), and enumerates all the tradesmen who furnished eatables, flowers, &c.

And for this the great proportion of English weddings are made affairs of flurry, worry, and display, so as to put to flight not only all the poetical graces, but too often all the higher and purer thoughts. The true Feast which sanctifies the wedding and brings Christ to bless the rejoicings is often omitted from a sense of incongruity with such a mere spectacle, or from fear of offending somebody on one side or another; and when it does take place, it is a stumbling-block to some, while this and the

presence of the choir obtain for it in the newspapers that vulgar announcement, "A Ritualistic Wedding."

What is to be done then? The Feast of Cana was a feast indeed, but have not we renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world? and why should they be showered on these occasions so as almost to smother the service of God under that of mammon? Why should not the announcement with which people so often begin, that it is to be a quiet wedding, be adhered to? Why should scores of civility be paid off to indifferent people, and display be provided to amuse them? Why should not the marriage take place in really early morning, with the Celebration at its fit time, and only attended by the bride's maidens, the nearest and dearest to both, and by those friends and relatives whose hearts are in the matter?

Later in the day there might, according to the circumstances of the family, be full festival, including neighbours, and above all, those special guests of our Lord's own Wedding Feast, the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind.

Might not this, for the very reason that it *would* be a grievance to this world, be more like a Christian wedding, and a safer beginning of the joint journey through life?

CHAPTER XXII.

WIVES.

THE new lights contemn the vow of obedience. Some clergymen say that they find brides trying to slur over the word obey; and the advanced school are said to prefer a civil marriage because it can thus be avoided.

Womankind in general is, however, still Christian enough to accept her lot, and though often thinking of her obedience lightly, and as a sort of joke, she knows by general example, even if she have no deeper thoughts, that her husband must be

master, and that hers must be the second place. If her thougnts are deep, they go to the great mystery of which marriage is the type:—

> "Showing how best the soul may cling
> To her celestial Spouse and King,
> How He should rule, and she with meek desire approve."

In these days of early love she realizes no difficulty, and can only think of the wills and tastes as one, as no doubt they are when fused together in the golden mist of happiness in the festal days of the honeymoon.

By the by, may it be hinted here that it would often be wise when the bride is very young, has never been abroad, and has no maid with her, not to make the wedding trip amid the discomforts and novelties of foreign hotels, involving fatigues and embarrassments not only very distressing, but sometimes leaving lasting effects on the health, when the young husband, ignorant what his new charge can do, overtaxes her strength, and she, unwilling to hang back or complain, undergoes serious damage. Besides, they will really enjoy every novelty much more when they are used to one another; for at the first it is each other's presence in peace that they really care for, and that can best be had in some quiet pretty resort in England, or in a tour amid the best home scenery. Then comes that first year, which those who have had happy lives now and then confess to have been the most trying. There must be a time in all new companionships when the company feeling goes off, and what has been unconsciously kept back of the true selves begins to show itself. No two people can be so absolutely alike as not to have some different wishes and opinions, some unlike tastes, some habits that jar on one another; and a compromise must be found, before they grow into that absolute oneness which happily is so frequent. Love and unselfishness best lead to that compromise, not fretting and wearing; but it is well if that accordance be by drawing one to a higher level, not by the other coming down. I do not mean down in a social point of

view, but in a moral and religious. It is one thing to acquiesce in "poor Clare's" abhorrence, a bread and cheese supper, and another to give up a Sunday afternoon to amusement.

The apprenticeship to the new trade of mistress of a house is apt to be severe, even if the young wife have any former knowledge, for she has to adapt herself to a different scale, and to rule over a new set of servants. Theory, if she have ever so much, is very difficult to reduce to practice, and she is pretty sure to have failures and difficulties which interfere with that excellent ideal with which she started of always having the most delicious little dinners in the world for her husband, at the least possible cost, and with the most cheerful face.

And if the servants are troublesome, or the butcher vexatious, it is not easy to realize at once that the repetition of such misfortunes is not entertaining to the man who has hitherto shown such sympathy, but who proves on trial to believe that women can always produce excellent meals without any trouble or preparation worth mentioning; and, moreover, feels himself a most seriously injured party in any failure.

However, failures work experience, and a woman of any sense or spirit will learn her way through these details in a year or two, if she really tries, and does not lapse into either a helpless, or a scrambling state.

There are four kinds of wives—the cowed woman, the dead-weight, the *maîtresse femme*, and the helpmeet.

Of the cowed woman there is not much to say. Poor thing! she has generally made a mistake. She is a weak woman, married to a rough, hard, sneering, or violent man, so that her life is spent in trembling endurance, and endeavours to avoid exciting his anger towards herself or his children; often, too, in the piteously loyal attempt to conceal from her nearest and best friends that anything is amiss. Her great danger is of being driven into falsehood by her timidity, of acquiescing in what she knows to be wrong, and often of becoming dull and dead to the only Voice of comfort, like the Israelites when they would not hearken to Moses from anguish of heart and heavy

bondage. If she can keep her heart open to this message, if she can be firm in acting up to her own standard, if she preserve perfect truth, and never let herself fall into the snare of shuffling to avoid anger, but is always gentle and patient, then she is no longer cowed, and is most likely in time to gain the reward of meekness. Only she must remember that meekness does not mean looking like a reproachful victim. Real Meekness smiles even with the tear in her eye, and does her best to make the soft answer a cheerful one.

The deadweight cannot exist without a fond husband, who will let her lie prone upon him. She has generally been a selfish, spoilt child, and she goes on expecting everything to be done for her, and everything to give way to her convenience. She does not demand it in a loud or vehement way, but she just sinks down in despair with a soft and piteous glance, or a few plaintive words of submission to the direst consequences. It is not acting; she really believes in the danger, and it generally ensures her the victory. The fear of her being ill will make her husband consent to almost anything, and she has only to be unhappy, fretful, and altogether "discomfortable" long enough to get her own way, keep him from carrying out any plan she dislikes, and sometimes to make him act against his own better judgment, and give up his plain duty. The very best of men finds it almost beyond human nature to carry out some noble scheme of self-sacrifice, if, so far from being encouraged at home, he is fretted at, moaned at, and treated with reproachful resignation, as one who has no love of, nor heed for, the interests of his wife and children.

There are two ways of being deadweights, physically and morally. The first comes by paying great attention to all ailments or fatigues, and making them a plea for being waited on, and being of no use, though of a good deal of importance, while doing nothing save for one's own pleasure. The other deadweight is almost worse, though she may be an excellent housewife and careful mother. If she is like the wife of Miss Thackeray's *Giant Killer*, or like Mrs. Gaskell's Mrs.

Dobson, without mind or energy for anything but the physical well-being of her family, her own amusement, dress, or aggrandisement, discouraging everything above the ordinary commonplace standard of conventionality, hating almost jealously conversation that interests her husband, but is beyond her powers, and grudging all that is not spent on her own petty notions of the suitable; then she is indeed a deadweight on his soul.

Another sort of deadweight wife is she who thinks her dress and pleasure the aim and purpose of her family's existence, neglects everything else for these, or else makes all subservient, and sulks or cries if any attempt is made to set bounds to her expectations of amusement. If a wife be occupied, not with what she would call frivolity, but with literature, science, or even philanthropy, and leaves her husband to be uncomfortable, and with the burthen of the family cares on his shoulders, she is a deadweight wife.

There are two terrible instances of deadweight wives on record. One in the Great Rebellion, whose terror at the siege of the castle, her husband commanded, so unnerved him that he surrendered, and was shot as a traitor to his cause; the other, the lady whose behaviour in a shipwreck had the same effect on her husband, leading to the rule which forbids officers in the navy from taking their wives in the same ship. Many women do rise in the supreme moment. There is truth in the lines in *Marmion*, but it is not a universal rule, for the woman who has only thought of herself may, "when pain and anguish wring the brow," be too much occupied with her own hysterics to be a ministering angel.

Sometimes these deadweight women, by leaving all the home burthen on their husband's shoulders, and thus depriving him of all rest and ease of mind, break down his health and spirits; and when he is dying they come to life too late—but generally to relapse and become a deadweight again on son, daughter, friend, or patron.

Nobody wishes or intends to be this kind of inconvenient being; but there is an easy slope leading to that condition.

As soon as a wife begins to give way more than can be helped to languor or lassitude, to use ailments as an excuse for not trying to exert herself, and, to make her husband the person to bear the brunt of everything, sparing herself instead of him, she is entering on that slope which conducts a woman to be nothing better than a cumberer of the ground. I believe nothing should be so dreaded by a woman as to find that she has not convinced her husband's judgment, but made him consent to some doubtful pleasure, as Samson's wife did, by making herself miserable.

The *maîtresse femme*, or grey-mare, disdains to rule by weakness. She likes her own way, and *will* have it, getting it generally by perseverance in arguing, sometimes by giving way to temper, sometimes by sheer obstinacy and going her own way, sometimes by more subtle management. If she be a woman of good taste, she will keep the fact out of sight as much as possible; if of bad taste, her exclusive self-importance will crop out everywhere, and it will be no secret that it is she who must be consulted and propitiated. Where the greater force of character is on the lady's side, it is perhaps inevitable that she should be the ruler; but this does not necessarily make her the obnoxious *maîtresse femme*, who governs with a high hand by force of vehemence and determination. Her will is never broken or bent; she will give up nothing, and she is never in the wrong. Either she volubly argues that hers is the only right way, or she cannot argue at all; but when the most convincing reasons against her proposition have been adduced, reproduces it in the original form. Moreover, it becomes well known in the household that nothing will be accepted that does not emanate from herself, and ingenious means are sometimes invented of so suggesting a plan that she may think it originated with her. She is jealous and distrustful of all her husband's belongings, friends, or pleasures, and he generally has to give them up for the sake of peace. Indeed she generally gets him into capital order in a few years, for he knows that she can make herself so disagreeable if he resists,

that, having no escape, he makes the best of his thraldom, sometimes indulging in a little subdued quizzing of himself and her, and infinitely enjoying any chance of free action.

"A very good thing for him too," says the lady who has a very poor opinion of the good sense of the other sex. Is it a good thing? Why, is it not, if he and the children are all kept in good discipline? Why is the general instinct of the world against it? or is that instinct only the old prejudice?

I suppose, for one thing, that a usurpation can never be wholesome; moreover, the unyielding will, struggling against and conquering God-given authority, must have evil in it: and it will generally be found that where one passionate will has thus assumed the whole management, some great and ruinous mistake of judgment will ensue, either in family affairs, or in the bringing up of the children, or both. The children may be thoroughly kept in subjection, but they will have a sense of harshness, and will generally be found to have less love for such a mother than is often felt by the children of the deadweight, who are apt to feel a sense of tender protection. The grey-mare may keep down the husband who chose her, who still views her with the old love, and who depends on her by habit for all his comforts; but she cannot restrain her growing-up sons, who shake off the yoke when it galls, and over whom she has no tender influence of love; so that people wonder why the family that seemed so well disciplined is turning out so ill.

The truth is that self-will is as fatal as selfishness, being in fact another form of self-love; and there is no true success or happiness for any woman who has not learned to efface her self; and even when she makes the utmost sacrifices, to do so without seeking the smallest credit for it.

But if the man be really the weaker vessel, and the rule is necessarily in the wife's hands, how is it then to be? To tell the truth, I believe that the really loving, good wife, never finds it out. She keeps the glamour of love and loyalty between herself and her husband, and so infuses herself into him that the weaknesses never become apparent either to her, to him, or

to most lookers-on, and those who *do* perceive on which side lies the strength, respect her too much to betray their suspicions, nay, respect him too. Often no one knows what she was save by the difference when she is taken away. She never thinks about her individual self at all,—she only dwells on what is best for him and what will help him most, and he leans more and more on her, generally only half knowing that he does so till he has to think of standing apart. His physical strength and the place he naturally occupies give him the vantage-ground, and thus the right relation is kept up.

It often does happen that the husband's tone of religious thought, and sometimes his principles and habits, are of an inferior kind to his wife's, who has married in blindness or ignorance. She sometimes has to suffer much in consequence, when he first begins to tire of the quiet life and lack of excitement at home. Those who have gone through such an ordeal are too loyal to describe it; and men on their side have been heard to say that they wish some one would show what it is to have a wife, who fancies that they are in mischief, whenever they come home an hour later than usual.

I believe the wife should do her best never to suspect her husband of being in mischief; certainly never be like Tam O'Shanter's proverbial wife, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm;" but if she be lonely and anxious, she should try firstly to pray, and then amuse her anxiety away, and keep a bright, unsuspicious face to greet the truant without reproach or plaintiveness. If she can find anything lively or pleasant to tell him, so much the better; and if he bestows any tidings on her, or shows that he has been entertained, she had much better smile and sympathise. The worst thing she can do is to seem hurt or injured, or say a word to remind him of her weary waiting. He is far more likely to feel compunction, if he find her good-humoured, than if she complains, and rouses him to self-defence and assertion of his liberty. Her chance is in making home pleasanter than his club or his friends, and if she makes it disagreeable by melancholy, upbraiding looks or words, she

naturally drives him away. Her annoyance will not win him, but her cheerfulness will, almost certainly in the long-run, though she may have much to go through in the meantime, while old habits are recurring and asserting their power.

To love him heartily, and let him feel himself her sunshine, is her best expedient, backed of course by earnest prayer and self-devotion; and if his dissipations are only skin deep, and resumed half from idleness and half from defiance of being tamed by marriage, the better side of his character and his deeper affections will most likely outgrow them, and they will die away.

No one ought to marry a man whom she does not *know* to be religious and sound in faith and doctrine. Men resent this maxim, for many a semi-sceptic knows that a woman is hardly ever good and trustworthy without faith, and he thinks that the ordinary worldly and domestic moral code is all that she has a right to expect from him. The best thing imaginable for him is to find himself mistaken.

But if folly, love, or worldliness have made the match—if the woman's religious convictions have only awakened since her marriage, or if the man have lapsed from his faith afterwards, then she finds herself unequally yoked. When her husband is merely careless, and not giving his mind to religion because he fancies it wearisome and womanish; steady, quiet, unobtrusive religious practice on her part, influencing everything and showing her deep wishes, often has a great and gradual effect; not always in the fulness of youth and prosperity, but the first trouble will probably make no small change, and show what time has done. Any way, a woman's duty is to love, pray, and hope on, and speak, or abstain, according to the character she has to deal with, taking untiring care that no word or action of hers belies her principles, taking care also not to fret and provoke by non-essentials, or to excite jealousy of clerical influence or interference—men's great bugbear. The less silly she is, the greater chance is there that her influence will prevail, especially if, as sometimes happens, the doubts are the fermentation of the

first genuine consideration of truths previously held carelessly from tradition.

Whether to discuss and enter into the subject, read the same books, and think out the matter, must be left for individual cases, and be according to what the husband asks of his wife. If he do not talk to her about the matter, most likely he is so working it out alone that her interference would do more harm than good; and if she have only guessed his opinion from what she has heard him say to others, chance-words dropped here and there, mayhap a careless sneer, or by his abstinence from religious ordinances, it is probable that he wishes her to continue in her own faith, and has little respect for her powers of argument. In that case she will be wiser in praying for him than enforcing on him the arguments, which he will despise, and which she cannot long sustain against him.

But if he do wish to talk things out with her, it is plain that he has a respect for her understanding, and needs her sympathy. St. Louis' famous counsel about not arguing, but answering with the sword, does not stand here, not only because she cannot use the sword, but because she is likely to have a good deal more foundation of knowledge, from which to argue, than the knights of the thirteenth century could have had.

Indeed, I suppose everyone finds out by experience whether he or she can argue and discuss to any good effect, whether there be only loss of temper, mere repetition of the old propositions, or if there be an invariable drawing over by the other side for want of answer, though afterwards the better sense recoils and sees the true reply; or whether clearer views and something like a right conclusion get elicited. Of course all this depends on the relative power of the other side, and the discussion must be accepted or avoided accordingly; but if it be undertaken it must in these serious matters be in all earnestness, and yet without loss of temper, showing that flippancy gives absolute pain, and with the understanding that there is an ardent seeking for truth. There is danger in such discussions, but it is the danger of one standing on a rock, stretching out to save one

in the waters—a generous danger, and one to be met by diligent prayer, leaning on the Sacraments, and reading of such books as may strengthen the faith; when telling and convincing passages must often occur to be shown or quoted.

It is a much more common case, however, to find the husband, who had seemed perfection, more careless and irreverent in speech and habits than he had shown before; perhaps prejudiced against the clergy, or unwilling to be troubled in his own house with the religious habits he accepted when a guest in his wife's home.

Here the disappointment is keen. The words may, I fancy, best be dealt with by private entreaty, and letting it be understood that they give absolute personal pain, though not by constant repetition of the protest, nor by such demeanour as to rouse the spirit of teasing. Most likely the seeming surprised and shocked that he will say before her as a wife what he would not have let her hear before marriage will make him ashamed enough to abstain before her, and this is one step.

As to the prejudice against clergy, it is very often mere young men's talk; and rather like the masculine aversion for cats, with exceptions in favour of all with whom there is personal contact. Of course there is evil in it, and danger of incurring the sentence of our Lord, "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me." It rises, I suppose, partly out of dislike and jealousy of authority, which some men will not acknowledge, but see accepted by women, from a class of men who seem to them so set aside from manly sports and habits as to be half women—partly out of the stories that are current of injudicious clergy. The dread of "priestcraft" is however the strongest of these two motives, mixed with a vague idea that the quieter manners, &c., are a sort of humbug, and that the men, intended to read prayers and be a moral police over the poor, want to usurp the same power over their mighty selves and their wives.

When a man has this foolish conventional tone, his wife had better not exasperate it by unnecessary acts, which she knows he disapproves, or by words that only strengthen his view of

female delusion. Let her do her best to bring the manly and upright acts of individual clergy before him, or get him obliged to work with his parish clergyman, and if the latter be a sensible man, a good deal of the mere conventional surface way of thinking will die away. Good sense, coupled with her own staunch adherence to principle, is really the best reply, avoiding all that can be possibly thought underhand, and not doing battle for what is not worthy of defence.

What the wife *is*, tells more than all her arguments, and as time goes on, and joys and sorrows are felt together, she daily becomes more indispensable, if she be the true kind of wife, 'whose great work and delight in life is to be the complement of her husband,' doing for him all those things that he need not do for himself—sparing him all vexatious details—giving him her sympathy in all his desirable pursuits, and exerting herself to share whatever he likes her to share in, and adapting herself to his moods with ready tact. He should always be sure of her glad acquiescence in all that is best and noblest, so sure, indeed, that the absence of such eager congratulation should be a sufficient damper for all her judgment does not approve—when now and then her instincts go against plans or acquaintances he has impetuously taken up.

Efficiency, sympathy, cheerfulness, unselfishness, and sweet temper: these are chiefly what go to make the real helpmeet wife. Even weak health or absolute invalidism need not disable her from these. Her utmost will be gladly accepted and met with love, whether that be the active aid Mrs. Kennicott gave her husband with his Hebrew—or Lady Calcott's sympathy from her couch—or Gertrude von der Wart's martyrdom or love. The helpmeet with a true and superior lord of her heart and home is so happy and blessed a being, that I hardly dare say anything of or to her. The thought of her brings the noble figure that King Lemuel's mother drew for him.

How beautiful the whole picture is—of the woman whose price is far above rubies! 'It is her husband's perfect trust in her, sure that all his secrets are safe with his other self, and

that he can to enjoy the safety-valve of talking out his cares and perplexities without fear of their being gossiped about.

How some of the verses remind us of the good wives who have been shown to us beside their husbands! "She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of his life." It brings before us Mrs. Gray of Capetown, spending her whole life in smoothing the way of her husband, saving him trouble and every care, and arranging for him every journey he took, so as to leave him as free as possible for the labours and troubles of his office.

Then follows the beautiful description of the well-ordered, hospitable, industrious household, happy, well clothed, well fed beautiful, yet in due subjection and discipline to a mistress "on whose lips is the law of kindness." Her husband is known when he sitteth among the elders in the gate, because the ease of mind and encouragement given by his well-ordered home strengthen, brighten, and make him doubly able to take his place.

In their degree there are many such households. Indeed the true lady—or loaf-giver—is sure to make homes that radiate light and warmth from their glowing central hearth.

And how exquisite is the climax! "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

In the gates, I suppose, of death, where her works do follow her!

Yes, in the loving husband's eyes, she excels all others first and last. She did so when he chose her in her bloom, and if she be gentle and yet resolute, diligent and yet tender, true and just and striving to conquer her failings, she will never cease to excel them all in his sight.

She may have to steer a difficult course between the two families on either side, she may make blunders; but she will be pardoned if she is thoroughly open about them, and if she deserves entire trust.

There may be a few clashes at first. Tempers will have to wear into one another, tastes to be learnt; but in time there is such a fusion together that even the countenances and handwritings acquire a sort of similarity, and the delight in one another is still such that to be left alone together is still a sort of honeymoon.

Favour is deceitful, the grace of merry youthful spirits may not last, and a bland engaging manner may be only put on for selfish purposes; and beauty is vain. Nothing but "the fear of the Lord" can enable a woman to meet the wear and tear of life, and bear up through it "cheered and cheering," with a sweetness that makes her countenance ever more lovely in the eyes of those who seek there for a response to all their feelings, and view it as the sure index of love and sympathy.

This is woman's best portion, the primary object of her creation, and that which above all makes her a creature as nearly perfect as can be moulded on this earth—self-forgetting, self-devoted, and viewing the utmost sacrifice of herself as simply natural!

Here is part of an old Scotch tradesman's address to his old wife after forty-two years' marriage, expressing to the full the feelings that often live on to the golden-wedding.

"A welding heat o' strong young love
Will last through winters many;
The frosts of years but tend to prove
The links that bind to Nannie.
Though teeth are fled and locks grown grey,
She's yet sae kind and cannie,
Love that outlasts young life's heydey
Is the love I bear my Nannie.

"'Mid a' the thoughts that trouble me,
The saddest thought o' any
Is wha may close each other's e'e,
May it be me or Nannie.
The ane that's left will sairly feel
Amid a' warld uncannie;
I'd rather face auld age mysell
Than lanely leave my Nannie."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISTRESS AND SERVANT.

THROUGHOUT the world there is a cry that there are no such things as good servants left, that maids change their mistresses as they change their caps, and have no feeling, no gratitude, &c., &c.

Of the absolute truth of this I beg leave to doubt. I *know* of numerous attached and faithful servants who seem almost a part of their mistresses, and who count up one another's years of service almost as badges of honour, viewing parting as almost an impossibility, heedfully watching over the interests of the family, and ready on an emergency to turn their hands to anything requisite. Nor are they all country servants. Some have had their share of London varieties and temptations, and yet have remained as unspoilt, faithful, and attached as ever.

Of course there is a large number on whom the ordinary saying is founded, maids who have a restless feeling for "bettering themselves" think it dull to stay longer in a place than is absolutely necessary to secure a character, and fly off at the least cause of offence. They are in fact young people who wish to enjoy life, and being under the disagreeable necessity of earning a livelihood, render the process as little irksome as possible.

Mistresses, on the other hand, having no trust or faith in

them, limit their endeavours to getting the work properly done, and so construct their discipline that as little enjoyment as possible can be had, and what the young spirit seeks of intercourse with its like can only be got by stealth.

Now let us look at the history and bringing-up of servants. The best used to be the daughters of small farmers, but this class is all but extinct; and the best we have now are the children of coachmen, gardeners, gamekeepers, and village tradesmen. Their mothers have usually been good servants themselves and train them with some knowledge of what will be required of them; they are kept at school long enough to be fairly educated, and their homes are comfortable and well furnished enough to give them a real attachment to cleanliness and nicety, while their manners have the tone of the servants' hall; and though the good housewifely mothers are too apt to do all the housework instead of teaching them, they are by far the most likely to be in their element, and be able to keep a good place when once they have it. Now and then, however, the having a comfortable home to fall back upon spoils them for a time, and makes them less willing to exert themselves; but take them all together, they are the most desirable class from whom to take nursery girls, or such as are to be in any place where there will be intercourse with children, since they have been generally carefully kept from knowledge of evil and bad habits.

Orphanage girls are next best in this respect, but they are apt to have less resource from not having lived a family life, and having worked more as pieces of mechanism, so that they do not know how to manage with chance materials, and as they have always worn a uniform, their notions about dress and prices are perfectly wild and vague; and they are likely to array themselves much more absurdly than those who have been used to pretty things and to computations of price. And having neither home nor mother, their mistress must either supply the lack herself, or have a servant on whom she can depend for so doing.

Next comes the thorough cottage girl only civilized by school. This girl is best to take as fresh from school as possible. There she is under discipline, and though often perfectly ignorant of all household work, excepting how to keep herself tidy and perhaps how to carry a baby, she has not learnt wrong ways of doing things, and is ready to obey, whereas if she has a year or two at home without school, she has seldom been under any government at all after she grew too big to be beaten; and the work she may chance to do about the cottage is only so much to be unlearnt. And an intellectual, clever school-girl, though in the end she will probably make a superior maid-servant, does often take more breaking-in than a quiet, meek, dull one, just as the clever girl in a schoolroom is apt to be the most unhandy. If these cottage-girls can be got, as their mothers say, "into a gentleman's family," it is the greatest advantage to them; but there is this difficulty, that the change is so very great that they are apt to be daunted. Whereas one blunt knife served at home, everybody uses three or four; pots and pans, plates, dishes, cups, and cloths, are in the same proportion, and it is a deadly offence —disgusting to everyone—to apply any one of these to the use destined to another. No one can tell till the girl is tried whether she will have energy and discernment to conquer the difficulty, or whether she will blunder on in a hopeless confused way, and be returned on one's hands as "incorrigibly dirty." And little girls of thirteen or fourteen, especially those whose mothers have brought them up on a system of monstrous, but never fulfilled, threats, really do not believe it when they are told that they will be sent home if they do not mend their ways. It often takes an ignominious dismissal to show them that something depends on themselves, and then comes another turning-point, deciding whether they will vigorously work up again, or sink into slatterns either at home or in low places.

Here and there a good, old, retired servant or tradeswoman is to be found, who keeps a little maid and makes her almost a companion; and the very women whom I mentioned as the mothers of the best servants, often, when their children are

young, want a girl to help, and will train her conscientiously. All these make the sort of places where it is well for a girl to begin, and she has some chance of being trained into a good, attached, and superior servant. But when ladies close their houses against anybody under eighteen, rather than have the trouble of teaching them, the process is that which creates "Servant-galism."

The first place is as drudge in some family where the mistress does the household work, but wants a *souffre-douleur* for the children, and the little maid is all day carrying the baby or driving the perambulator in the street. Church, prayers, good habits are forgotten, and the girl's clothes would not hang together if her mother did not take them home to wash and mend them. Nothing is gained but the absence of one mouth from the cottage table, one body from the over-crowded room. The girl is induced to submit by the hope of change when she can bring a year's growth and a year's character, but she is not fit for anything much better, except that she is somewhat bigger and stronger, and her next place is principally pleasanter by giving her a little more money to spend on dress, and an utterly unsupervised "Sunday out."

If she be a dull, two-fisted girl, unwilling to take the pains required for niceness, and with plenty of strength, she will become the untidy drudge of a lodging-house—too often an utterly godless occupation—or else she will do the rough work of a farm-house, fall into very undesirable ways with the ruder sort of farm-boy, and probably marry one of them, and begin a rough, thriftless household in a disreputable manner. If girls have dexterity and ambition, they make their places a ladder to rise by, seldom staying more than a year in each; and when they are tall enough and polished enough, offer themselves for the house and parlour work in gentlemen's families. Registry offices are their familiar resorts; they have never learnt to regard their mistresses with any affection or consideration, and service is to them a means of obtaining food, lodging, and fine clothes till they can marry, for which purpose they "walk"

with as many young men as possible, viewing their mistress as the natural enemy of such acquaintances.

Once get into a course of maids of this kind, and your domestic life will be nothing but a series of cook-stories and miseries.

But perhaps the true way of looking at our relations with servants is to remember that the time of service to them is that which answers to our time of young ladyhood, and is their period of domestic training. They begin younger, and often leave off later; but domestic service is really a profession with them, lasting till marriage, and it is much more guarded, and gives them much more useful attainments, than the exercise of any little home employment. But their own saying, "Service is no inheritance," is so far true—that no one has any right to be vexed with a maid for having a lover, provided he be a fit one. Any engagement ought to be avowed, and the times of meeting sanctioned; but there is a semi-engaged state of "walking" with a man on trial which is more difficult to deal with, since it is experimental, and really, as sensible maids have been known to say, the only way of becoming acquainted.

Servants who have once, as young girls, been landed in a kind, sound place, where they are well cared for, and made happy without being spoilt, and where they see others viewing long continuance in the same place as highly creditable, are not apt to be restless. Of course, follies will come over them: some giddy friend may unsettle them, stories of high wages may fire their ambition, some love affair may disturb them, or some fret of temper seize them. They are but girls after all; but in spite of all the evil that is said of them, many and many a family could show nice, fresh, bright, good young maids, attached and happy, and only meaning indefinitely to part when the time of marriage shall come.

Where there is a perpetual change of servants there is almost certain to be a fault either in the mistress, the upper servant, or the house. Sometimes there is some inherent defect in the maids' quarters, which keeps them cramped, uncomfortable, and

irritable, and, of course, longing for a change. Sometimes a trustworthy, valuable old servant will be very disagreeable and tyrannical to those with her; and sometimes the mistress worries vexatiously.

To be "very particular" every one knows is right. It is no kindness to a servant, but quite the reverse, to take negligence or neglect of rules easily. It may seem like daintiness and selfishness to complain when the meat is underdone, when there is a taste of smoke in everything, and caterpillars drop out of the cauliflowers, but if the maids are our charge, it is our duty to see that they do theirs. Cobwebs and dust, brushes in wrong places, and candles left to waste their sweetness on the desert air, ought to be noticed. So should unauthorized voices in the kitchen, lingerings at the back door, and unpermitted absences. No servant worth keeping will resent the being obliged to observe rules, and to do her work thoroughly. If she does, she had better go; but if she have any sense, she will for ever be grateful to "my old missus;" "to be sure she was particular!"

It is not strictness that alienates servants—it is want of trust, and nagging surveillance. To be always peeping and spying is a continued insult. Keep a quiet check on waste, and do not leave temptation in the way, but do not show distrust or suspicion, or you spoil a good girl's sense of honour. Orders should be given decidedly, as if you meant them to be kept—not worried over, as if you did not believe they would be; and one thorough reproof for their transgression will go much further than a hundred little frets and reminders.

And consideration needs to be shown therewith. Children from the first should be taught not to give servants needless trouble, nor to leave wanton footmarks or litter, to soil and tear without mercy, nor to use unlimited plates at luncheon to be washed up by the poor scullery-maid, who never has her hands free. And the mistress should recollect the same, and be kind to ailments, and thoughtful when maids have home troubles, instead of viewing their summons to a parent's sick-bed, or

their tearful eyes, as an injury to her own Great Mogulship. It seems impertinent to a Christian woman to remind her of this duty, and yet I have known of instances where a lady has, from the habit of thinking her maids as mere "hands," shown most cruel neglect and hardness towards their sorrows.

Good mistresses and good servants alike are for the most part independent of the registry. There are great ramifications of acquaintance, and a place that is known to be comfortable is almost sure to be applied for by persons of whom fuller knowledge can be obtained than by the mere character. Cooks are the chief exception, because they require more skill, training, and experience; and the preliminaries of their work are distasteful to most young girls at an age when present disagreeables are not weighed against future high wages—and thus there are fewer in number of them. On the whole, for houses where there is no call for display, the home-made article is the safest and best. A kitchen-maid straight from a *good* great house, where her character can be answered for, is the best material; and her youthfulness is a much less dangerous defect than those which may exist in people you get from advertisements. If she can train a girl under her to take her post when she marries, or is otherwise disposed of, a succession is established, and traditional habits kept up. This is certainly a case of "first catch your hare;" but as there are plenty of hares—*i.e.* good servants—in the world, make a start with one, and trust her, and she will train the rest. It seems to me that if there be one good, sensible, well-principled servant in a small household—say of two or three—and she is not very young, whether she be nurse, cook, or parlour-maid, it is better to give her authority, and then not be afraid of youth in the others. She can judge much better than a lady what is dangerous for them, and is a person who can have better knowledge of the character of their "young men." A woman over thirty and a girl of seventeen will be more to be trusted than two young things about twenty.

In fact, I think the prejudice against girlhood does much to

perpetuate the faults complained of in servants. A little thing of fourteen, enchanted with promotion, has time to become attached, and has given her confidence before the love-period sets in. She is far more likely to go through it well than if she comes from a series of chance places, for she will have formed steady habits. Besides, a girl taken fresh from school, either preparing for Confirmation or newly-confirmed, can be at once taken in hand with religious teaching, and brought to Holy Communion; whereas the girls who have taken their chance in second-rate places have too often entirely lost the habit, or have never formed it. They have seen a great deal too much of the world, and not often for their good. Of them nothing is known but that in their last place they have been "honest, sober, active," &c.; while a girl whose antecedents are known, and whose mother has put her into our hands, or for whom we feel accountable to our friend, the clergyman's wife of her parish, comes to us far more likely to make our house a home for the time being, and to accept advice or restraint. But we must beware of selfishness in the matter. It may vex us that the girl aspires to better herself as soon as we have had the trouble of teaching her, but we ought not to call her ungrateful. Rather we should remember that it is not well for anyone to outgrow a situation, and we should do our best to find a safe and wholesome place for her, where she may still be watched over by friends. And it is not my own experience that there is this haste for change and promotion. I do not think I should be believed, if I told how many girls I have known clinging to their first place at low wages because it was a happy home to them, even after it seemed to their mistress as if they ought to rise higher.

As to taking girls from the immediate village, the advisability entirely depends on the character of the place, and its tone of opinion. If it is a place where petty peculation is common, or where there is any very strong habit of gossip, it may be much better to send the girl where she has no acquaintances, especially if the dangerous though charitable experiment be made with

her of taking the good one of a bad family. But my own experience has never led me to regret the taking girls whose home lay close at hand.

The truth is that as long as we view our maids as cranky self-willed machines for getting our work done, we and they shall be one perpetual plague to each other. If we view them as fellow-members of Christ, to whom we have our office in the one great Body, who are a part of our homes, and at home, likewise in them, we shall, with some disasters of course, get on in the main with peace and mutual love.

Not that we need be for ever teaching or advising them. A young thing, or an ignorant one, needs special instruction and leading, but after that—if we know she has had good teaching, some regular reading at family prayers, lending of books, and general influence is enough. The reading should be short and spirited. Comments on the Bible and Prayer-book always seem to be liked and should be pointed—not of the old-fashioned, dreamy kind. As to books, I believe it is a great mistake to have a special library of "books adapted for servants." There is nothing they so dislike, or that is so unlike themselves, as the model Thomases and Maries in books, except, perhaps, that well-meaning literature in which little nursery-maids convert all the children, while the head-nurse drinks wine in the pantry, and hides her lady's jewels in their boxes. Remember that the servants *can*, if they choose, read any book of yours they like, and that many of them have been well educated. Tell them, therefore, freely what you think is pleasant reading, and give them a turn of a book from your box, if it is suitable. They are no more likely to soil it than you are, and if there be any reason for special care, you have only to mention it, and you may be sure it will be taken. In general, either a religious book, or a good, rather exciting, story, are the best liked—the present amount of cultivation generally appreciates these, but not often history, travels, or tales connected with unfamiliar scenes—and it is best to give such tales, or the perilous cheap literature will

supply the appetite for something interesting and not innocent.

The valuable servant of a certain age is of course far less common than the bright, intelligent, neat-handed girl of whom anything may be made. Sometimes she has loved her mistress and the children too much to seek any other home; sometimes she has been disappointed in a love affair; sometimes she has a grim contempt for men, and a belief in the proverb about needles and pins; sometimes she is waiting in a long, lingering, highly respectable engagement for a no-longer-"young man," waiting for the change that is to enable him to marry.

She must any way be grown in the family, or at least transplanted from intimate friends. She is too valuable to be adrift, seeking a chance situation, and in general, unless she be a widow forced to go out in the world again, or a daughter who has lived at home until her parents' death, she is only to be had in the break-up of some household. "Treasures," too, do not always bear to be transferred, and on a new ground will be touchy and tyrannical. Moreover, it is quite as necessary to have a character of the lady who gives the character, as of the servant. Whether conscientious truth, timid dread of consequences, easy good-nature, or angry temper actuate the writer of the "character," there is no knowing without personal acquaintance; but, on our own side, let us bear in mind that there is nothing in which the rule "to be true and just in all my dealings" comes so much into play.

Good nurses can generally be procured by getting young women who have been trained in good nurseries. The care of children is so congenial to women, that it brings out their best points; and there is much to be said in favour of the having a lady-nurse in those large nurseries of wealthy families which form a world apart. Many a young widow, or a nursery governess, would make an excellent motherly nurse, and give the refinement which is sometimes lacking with less educated women.

Ladies' maids are a much maligned race, for in general they

are a very kindly, affectionate class of women, their mistress's real friends, who will undergo great fatigue and exertion for them in illness, and support them through small ailments, sympathize with their griefs and joys, and often show much tact and discretion in dealing with them and their friends. Literature represents them as affected, deceitful, gay in their dress, and altogether with the air of the Abigail or *soubrette;* whereas, in fact, they are generally quiet, rather superior people, necessarily refined in their ways, though sometimes erring a little on the over-refined side, dressing not indeed gaily, but with the degree of fashion that their profession almost requires, and usually extremely careful of their demeanour. They are often deeply religious persons, and a little care on their mistress's side is almost always repaid, even when they come young, thoughtless, or spoilt by a careless family. It is a very good plan for a lady to make a practice of reading to the maid—who is brushing her hair—a short piece from some religious book, or a hymn in the morning perhaps, and something amusing in the evening. This is especially to be recommended in the case of young girls, who may thus be prevented from forming habits of chatter and gossip.

Ladies' maids however are but a small class, recruited either from the ranks of upper house-maids and nurse-maids, or from those who may be termed the *cadettes,* who belong to families who can apprentice them to dressmakers before sending them out as young lady's maid.

But whatever servant it lacks, every house must have its cook, and hence the great difficulty in finding them, added to which, they have many more opportunities of marrying than other servants, and shrewd men, of their own class, well know the advantage of having a cook for a wife. However, it is no use to begin on cook stories. I do not believe in the dismal allegations that drinking and dishonest cooks are inevitable; I am certain that where there is care taken that the household should have sound religious habits and morals, and there is kindly care and supervision without spying—not as a measure of

self-defence or police, but simply because as mistresses we are responsible, and have a duty to our servants' souls—there a spirit will form itself that will attach and raise the household to a trustworthy level. Those who look on all servants as a class or a hostile race, to be treated as machines, and watched like thievish Arctic foxes, never deserve to have a good servant, and never will get one. There never was a truer proverb than—"Like master like man." Like mistress like maid. If you are conscientious yourself, you will get conscientious servants, either by forming them or attracting them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION.

THE child grows up in happy families watched and checked, and when she has done wrong, pours out her grief for her error to her parents and is forgiven. She is taught her duty to God, and she follows the leading of her home and the circumstances round her through the earlier years of her womanhood.

But she may have had to form her principles for herself, and even when well trained her soul and spirit often awaken to needs that cannot be satisfied with what contented her girlhood. Perhaps she can no longer take family dicta or home habits for granted as perfection. Some unhappy crisis may have deprived her parents of their entire infallibility in her eyes. Or she has feelings and longings with which they cannot sympathize, convictions they do not comprehend, or something has revealed to her that there are questions they cannot answer so as to satisfy her—in short, that she cannot keep any longer in the old groove without some certainty that it is the right one. Or again, death and change have left her altogether independent, and forced her to think and act for herself, while she has left behind all the

familiar voices of outspoken praise and blame that instantly took her to task for her foibles.

What has she when she has lost or outgrown her home guides? She has her God. She has perhaps knelt with a new and overwhelming sensation as she said, "Our Father, which art in heaven," and she knows what it is to have prayers made nearer and more real by the troubles that have left her to that true Father. Some minds feel this intimate support so deeply and entirely, and are so reserved, that they would shrink from all helps external thereto. No one would dare to say that they are in error. They watch themselves, confess their daily shortcomings with deep repentance, and take home the promise of pardon through the Infinite Merits held out to them in the Absolution and sealed in the Holy Eucharist, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with them. The Absolutions in the Communion Office, and at Matins and Evensong are spoken in virtue of our Lord's commission to the Apostles, and to those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe carry the full message of pardon.

The full efficacy of these public Absolutions has been of late called in question; but the whole body of English divines ever since they were framed have regarded them as true authoritative Absolutions. It may be enough to mention Bishops Sparrow and Wilson, and Keble. Nay, the fact that they can only be spoken by a priest, his position and the language they contain, seem to me to make it conclusive that they were thus framed to serve the needs of those with whom private confession was no longer made compulsory. The grace of Absolution is only granted to the truly penitent, but among those who all alike hear, the true Pardoner can single out the cases where the word is mixed with faith in the hearers. The question surely is not what the early Church meant by the mutual confession and Absolution of priest and people in the analogous part of the Liturgy, but in what sense our Bishops and priests meant the priest to pronounce the words they framed and put into his mouth.

Therefore it does not seem to me that a person who is not in danger of complacent self-deceit, and is sure to find out, or be shown his or her faults, is necessarily in need of any other confession than that direct to God Himself. And in the case of very young girls (save on very exceptional grounds), private confession has been often found not to work well, partly, perhaps, from the present state of things where it does not come as a matter of course, and therefore (especially in girls' schools) is an excitement and a distinction. Nay, even, if we may judge from the reports of those who have seen the ways of Roman Catholic girls of the same age, there is a strange levity, a hunting-up of faults, as if their recapitulation were a mere lesson, and a tendency to treat them as something with which to answer the priest's questions. Then there is the excitement of talking about oneself, especially to one of the other sex, and the uncertainty of the perfect judgment of the hearer. Marie Louise de l'Amourous complained that her confessors were constantly being *taken in*, unintentionally, by her penitents; and Mère Angelique was whole years in finding any one who could deal with her nuns. A sensible woman is generally much better able to discipline a tolerable girl's little follies than any man can do; and, as we have said before, when she is really penitent there is the Absolution for her in Church.

Of boys I am not speaking. I do not know enough of the evidence of the advantage or disadvantage of the practical working. They have worse temptations; they do not so much love to talk of themselves; and that may be good for them which does not seem to be beneficial to their sisters. Yet my feeling is that private confession ought not to be forced on any one as a prescribed duty or matter of course; but rather its theory should be explained, as showing the way to a privilege which may be much needed, but not certainly.

I would not link it, as some do, with a young girl's Confirmation and first Communion; nor prescribe regular brief intervals for her, while she has a careful home and religious parents; but only lead her to self-examination and direct confession in her

heart, going along with the two forms in Church, and accepting the Absolution as freeing her.

By and by, with circumstances will come the deepening and the craving for more; but if that *more* can be attained in direct communion with God, all is well.

Yet for one spirit that can thus stand alone, there are twenty (at least among women) who need counsel and guidance. To such the *vivâ voce* confession, the direct individual Absolution, and the counsel for the future are an unspeakable comfort. The vagueness of the silent confession is removed, and the watchfulness necessary for a future one is a great assistance both in self-examination and in governing the actions. Of course it is easy to say that the confession to God alone is more direct, and that we *must* be honest with the All-seeing. No doubt many have so found it, and they have walked and still walk in light; but they should not constrain all others to measure by the same rule as themselves.

The popular objections to confession are, first, that which I should be ashamed to mention, but that it really is sometimes made by people who ought to know better, and is founded on stories occurring in foreign lands, with a rude peasant priesthood, namely, the insinuation of evil. This is too absurd and preposterous to be made by any one who knows the character of the English clergy.

The next is family dislike to any external person knowing not only the sins of the individual, but the difficulties and secrets of the household, which are supposed to become matter of gossip; also a fear of undue influence. This is for want of properly understanding the system. Not only is the priest bound to absolute secrecy, but it is one of the primary rules that no irrelevant matter should be introduced, nor anybody else accused. And if people doubt of the judiciousness of the director, they have done their very best to cause the difficulty, by the furious outburst of clamour which met the petition that confessors might be licensed by the Bishops. This, though every priest has *ex officio* the power of Absolution, would have

marked off those with wisdom, judgment, and experience enough to be safe spiritual guides. Most likely such a plan was contemplated by the composers of the exhortation in the Liturgy, when the officiating minister is made to say, "Let him come to me, *or to some other* discreet and learned minister." And in general, clergymen have far too much on their hands to *wish* to listen to anything superfluous from their penitents.

Another objection, and one which deserves respect, is that the leaning on another mind is fostering weakness, and that direction destroys strength of character. But is not this saying that to lean on a staff makes one weak, and that therefore the weak must not use one? It may be so in some cases. There is a school of discipline in the Roman Catholic Church which makes implicit submission the great perfection, but even there it is only one school that does so, and that one so late as to be of our own day. It is never likely to be a frequent danger of our sturdy English nature, which finds a dogged assertion of freedom of action far more congenial. Even if it were, it must be taken as one of the minor counterbalancing evils that beset everything, however good.

Another of these evils, and the worst of all, is the fancy that, freedom from the past sin being thus gained, a new score may be begun. Nobody in these days would dare to put this into words, for of course any such feeling shows that there is no repentance, that the confession has been only outward, and that there is no hatred of the sin, so that the very conditions of Absolution are not fulfilled.

Such are the objections usually made, even by those who are fully instructed in the meaning of Sacramental Confession, and would acknowledge the need thereof on a deathbed, or in the case of the conversion of an ungodly person, who could not be admitted to Communion without evidence of sincerity. They would make the rule rest on "if he cannot quiet his own conscience."

This is the rule, the Church rule, and a perfectly safe one. The conscience that is unquiet needs spiritual comfort and

counsel, and ought not to be debarred from it; and the conscience ought to be disquieted, not only about some great palpable offence, but about the multitude of petty sins that—as it has been well said—are like falling leaves, each one very small in itself, but forming a choking mass of decay and corruption if not cleared away.

A general sense is awakened in a person's mind, that he or she is not going on very well. Prayers are languid, there is dulness and wandering at Church, no energy in the few good works in hand, or it may be a sense of dissatisfaction with oneself after a time of pleasure and excitement; or a doubt whether all one's habits are right in themselves, or whether one is acting from worldliness or obedience. Attempts at self-examination often only puzzle for want of definiteness, or from raising up conflicting questions of duty. The numerous manuals given for the purpose seldom can probe to the point. It is like reading medical books instead of going to the doctor, a proverbial way of getting into a morbid state of mind. Some classes of mind do fall into a distressed and melancholy state from never being sure that they are not deceiving themselves, while others wear through the time, and lose the sense of present pain, whether for their own good or not cannot be told; while others, as diaries show, go on struggling and yearning still.

Would it not be wiser to turn to the remedy the Church has provided? A priest is of course not infallible, but, even humanly speaking, if he be known as a spiritual guide, he must have had experience in dealing with souls, such as will enable him to explain how to arrive at the bottom of the vague disquietude, and show where is the untraced sin, and advise how to conquer it, or satisfy the inquirer as to what is the paramount duty where two are conflicting, guide to books and devotions that might otherwise never have been heard of, and point out modes of self-discipline or duties neglected. And if there be some remembered misdeed making the conscience sore, some choice for the worse that has thrown the whole course astray, or an

accumulation of offences committed in ignorance, or thoughtlessness, then how infinite is the comfort of the authoritative individual Absolution, in the Name of Him Who gave power to bind and to loose, how blessed to leave the burthen at the foot of the Cross!

It seems to me that during the childhood and simplicity of the child or woman in the hands of her parents, this other guidance is not needed, and that the pardon she needs is pronounced in the public rites of the Church; but that when the time comes that she passes beyond these home props, and becomes uneasy and perplexed in the deepening of her character and her perception of higher aims, the "spiritual comfort and counsel" become most desirable. Some crisis in earlier times sometimes makes it well to begin, such as some great misdemeanour, or some fault that no one has been able to correct.

For my own part, I would never press on anyone the need of confession, unless I saw that the conscience was troubled and restless, or I had reason from my own observation to think that there was some evil habit visible to others yet undetected by the individual. But the whole doctrine involved in the explanation of the article, "The forgiveness of sins," and the commission of Christ to His Apostles should be taught to everyone. And if the desire for confession were awakened, I would never attempt to hinder it, not knowing what may be the need of the soul that I cannot see, nor what serious loss and damage may be inflicted by withholding it from what it may justly claim as part of its present right in the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the choice of the Spiritual Guide, circumstances are the leading of Providence, and the parents, when consenting or promoting, have a full right of decision. There may often be reasons why the parish priest (even if he be willing to hear confessions) may not be the best for an individual case. A comparative stranger may be the best judge of the amount of failure, and the lack of knowledge of the surroundings may be a positive advantage; while to another, the fatherliness

of the clergyman known from infancy may be a special blessing.

In the absence of any authoritative regulation, nothing is possible but advice and hints given with much diffidence. One of these would be, that the choice had better fall on an elderly priest rather than a very young one, since it is certain that the former must have more experience; and besides he is a tried man, and far less likely to try to carry out theories of his own, or imitations of practices the fitness of which for English character has not been proved.

The other questions, of frequency of confession, and also whether it shall be only to the Spiritual Guide, or to any other priest when he is not within reach, these must be left to his decision, and there is no more to say about them.

A hint or two more must be given. It is almost incredible that such should be needed, but the want of them has made itself only too evident, though, perhaps, more in those who have been taught to use this privilege when not ripe enough to appreciate it, or who have only taken it up from a sort of fashion.

Of all hateful kinds of gossip, one of the most shocking is that about the different ways of confessors. It is not only irreverent, but a dishonourable breach of sacred confidence. The priest is bound to absolute secrecy with regard to his penitent; the penitent is just as much so with regard to any peculiarities of his. Besides, where can the real penitence be, if there be levity enough to make such observations?

Again, we know how the poor plead that they do not see that such and such a person is the better for going to church, or being a communicant, and bring up all his faults against him. It is the same with those who are known to be in the habit of confession. The world has laid hold of a truth here. They ought to be better than other people, or else they bring scandal on their profession. Relations are quick to note the errors of one another, especially if their notions are not the same, and outbreaks of temper, selfishness, evil-speaking, or worldliness

will be cited as proofs of the incompetency of the system that has not cured them.

Now ill-temper is sometimes a bodily or nervous affection, and sometimes it really springs from intense sensitiveness not yet under control; but the other faults are all wilful ones, and their continuance unrepressed can only spring either from dishonest confessions, from want of earnestness in following out the remedies, or from that terrible levity, before mentioned, which presumes on pardon to go on in sin. Therefore, the person who is not striving to improve under this system is in the double danger which is enhanced by all misused helps.

And this is one reason for which I would so strongly deprecate its being enforced before the soul has reached maturity enough to feel the need of it. And if a young person asked for it under circumstances that made it possible that she was led by imitation, or fancy, or desire of making a sensation in her family, it would be well to show her the great solemnity of the rite, and beg her to make as sure as possible of her own motives, before granting the request.

It should be remembered that the law, universally enforcing private confession before Communion, was not one of the Universal Church; but was made in the thirteenth century, in hopes of restraining the lawlessness of the times. Public confession, general enough for all to join in with personal recollection, and public Absolution, applied no doubt to those who truly repent and believe, have been afforded by our Church; but where there is a difficulty in knowing whether the repentance be true, or in detecting the sin, then private confession is the means sanctioned for the recovery of the soul.

Nor does Spiritual Guidance at all mean putting oneself into the hands of one who will exact blind obedience, or exercise priestcraft, as it is called. Such influence as we were reminded of in *Dominie Freylinghausen* exists wherever there are weak women and ministers who try to rule them. The Pharisees devoured widows' houses, and there were those in St. Paul's time who led captive silly women. Molière has shown off a

Tartuffe and Dickens a Gradgrind. But these men prevailed by flattery and outward show, not by the stern and strictly-guarded relations of priest and penitent. The leading is not an attempt to direct in the common ways of life, but an assistance in dealing with sins, and in rising to higher and deeper devotion. To those who feel the exceeding danger of drifting into bad habits and worldly customs, and heaping sin upon sin for want of warning, it is an inestimable boon, supplying the lack of those voices of home whose praise or blame were our "way-marks sure" in our childhood. If we look at biography, we shall find religious melancholy far more common among those who try to do everything for themselves, trusting merely to their own sensations, than to those who have kept to the way traced by our Lord for His Church, in which is found the constant joy of Pardon and Peace.

CHAPTER XXV.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS.

Most writers take the line of declaring that what opinions are held is immaterial provided we are in earnest about them; nay, most books of advice for women never enter on the choice of religion or politics at all. They ignore politics altogether, and as to religion, they tell us to be religious without being theologians, which seems to me impossible in intelligent creatures.

But in writing for the many, it is the most popular way to assume that there are many ways of being in the right—which is pretty much as if we were to say that it was very harsh to say that only one line between two points can be straight, and very illiberal to declare that only one answer to a sum can be right.

The real difficulty is that, except in what is strictly revealed and commanded in matters of faith and practice, nobody is really right, and every question has two sides, on which views are vibrating, some nearer the exact right than others.

In our country of open discussion and strong parties, this will always be especially the case. "Her Majesty's Opposition" is sure to be an institution, and our balance both in Church and State is preserved by the watchfulness and caution of both parties, and by the swinging of the pendulum to one side or the other. Ever since we have had a country, there has been always a strife between loyalty to the sovereign and to the law, and whether the will of the monarch or of the people, of the few or of the many, should be paramount.

In like manner, ever since we have had a Church there have been questions on authority, on patronage, on all sorts of details; and ever since the Reformation there have been two sets of opinions running along side by side—the Catholic and the Calvinist. Our Church has kept both within her pale, for surely it is better that there should be "no schism in the Body," so long as the vital articles of the faith are not impugned—even though the privileges she offers are not understood in their fulness.

The worst times of England were those when the most fervent of the Church party had resigned their benefices as non-jurors; and the indifference of the Court told in universal laxity. John Wesley, the first to awaken from the lethargy, was distrusted and discouraged till he formed a schism, but the spirit he had aroused showed itself in many excellent persons within the Church. For the most part, however, they held Calvinistic opinions, and trusted more to the feelings, than to the faithful reception of the Sacraments. With them, the one great point was the conviction of sin, and the assurance that it had been atoned for by our Lord. To produce and maintain these feelings, constant sermons were needed on the one subject, and whatever could excite them was eagerly sought for. The intense love and clinging to our Lord was the blessed thing in the holier

among those who held these opinions, but the weak points were that they held so exclusively to this feeling as to disregard the Sacraments, and that in their dread of trusting to works they forgot that sanctification is the will of God. The endeavour at obedience when the soul was not yet conscious of direct illumination was viewed by them as mere legality. There were many saintly-minded people among them who loathed sin for the love of Christ, and for the same reason exercised the greatest love to all; but those who were not of such a frame were tempted to think no effort at goodness of any use so long as they were not converted, when they expected that the Infinite Merits would hide all their sin.

All this time there were sober-minded quiet people who held the old doctrines of the English Church. They believed that Regeneration comes in Baptism, and that some go on living their new life without any palpable conversion, and that where, after a course of evil, their conversion takes place, it is a rousing of baptismal grace, not a new birth in itself. They believed that Sacraments are the means of evidencing our faith and coming for our Lord's promised pardon to be applied to ourselves, and that a holy life of obedience is the best evidence of faith; nay, that though man's doings are imperfect, yet that what deeds he does under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are accepted of God, and are steps towards Heaven. And when the Bible was appealed to as the only ground of faith, they held that the teaching of the Church must be accepted to explain it, and guide us in our understanding of it. And especially were they jealous of all teaching not sanctioned by the Church; but they took the Prayer-book as the rule, and clung fast to the appointed ministry.

From among these rose the deeper thinkers who took up, explained, and strengthened all that was held by the English Church, and developed her true powers, dwelling on her Catholicity, and realizing what is meant when the Apostles tell us of one glorious, spotless, and united Church.

The Prayer-book had been the witness of the truth throughout.

These persons began by acting up to the standard there set forth, which had been thought obsolete, and behold! it developed into a thing of power and might far beyond what they had themselves understood.

But herewith came one danger. There was a habit deeply rooted in the English mind of regarding everything done or believed by Roman Catholics as necessarily wrong, and of confounding what is permitted with what is enjoined; so that many persons, when they discovered that the Roman theory had been so much misrepresented, felt a strong reaction towards it, which was increased by the determination of the Evangelicals to view every attempt at following up the English Prayer-book as a return to Romanism. And when this cry was echoed in high places, some grew impatient, and thought Catholicity was disowned by the Church of England, and others were attracted by the strong claims that Rome can show to continuity and unity within herself. Their defection made the trial greater to the loyal love and faith of the others, who held fast by their Mother, and by their steadfastness have obtained the almost universal recognition of much which was viewed as a strange novelty when first brought forward.

Religious people in England are, as a rule, belonging to one or other of these two camps—those who hold to the Evangelical side, which lays stress on the individual sense of pardon through faith in the Atonement, and the Catholic, which builds on that faith the belief in the power of the Sacraments, and of personal holiness and meritorious action through the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Between these two poles there are many degrees of difference, some Evangelicals in the essentials of their doctrine being attached to the framework of the English Church, from association and loyal feeling; while of the other side there are many who have a strong faith in the teachings of the Church, yet who dread whatever they have not been used to, or that they think savours of Rome. There are some who wish to be in harmony with the whole Church, Eastern and Western alike,

and therefore adopt customs which to others appear like mere imitations of Rome.

Another thing must be allowed for, namely, that one class of minds is helped and another hindered by external ornament, and these are apt to be intolerant one of another.

Of late years, too, a third party has sprung up. It is what can only be called the Rationalistic. Both High and Low Church had been agreed in viewing Holy Scripture as the final appeal as to truth, but this third party, Broad as it has come to be called, insists on examining into the authenticity of Holy Scripture itself, and only accepting in a modified degree what approves itself to them. They demand a close definition of inspiration, and the most rigid evidence of the authenticity of each book, and they refuse to be bound by anything they cannot sympathize with.

The High Churchman can meet all this better than the Low Churchman. He bases his acceptance of the Holy Word, not only on its internal evidence, but on the authority of the Church, which he can distinctly prove. He has never said that "the Bible and the Bible only" is his religion, but that the religion the Church has taught him may be proved in all its details from the Bible.

Both High and Low are equally sure that Holy Scripture is God's Holy Word, and as His Word beyond our understanding. As to criticism, that may come, for there is no need to fear it; the "Word shall not pass away," it will only be made clearer in the end, though difficulties may be revealed by half knowledge. And it often ends by showing that what we have taken for a direct Scriptural statement is really no such thing, only a sort of traditional understanding of it, put into words, perhaps, in our first nursery-book of stories from the Bible, and thenceforth confounded with the absolute words of Holy Writ.

There were Pharisees and Sadducees from the time Judah ceased to live under immediate inspired guidance, and there always will be persons who cling devoutly to ordinances, persons

who care most for spiritual feeling and do not heed externals, and persons of a critical spirit.

The higher and nobler of all these do not differ greatly. They all hold the same Faith and Love, and all walk together in light. Sadoc and Gamaliel, if they had been contemporaries, would not have differed as to the Love of God being the foremost motive of good men. It is the followers, the ignorant and the narrow on both sides, who have party spirit and run into hatred and variance.

Yes, we must, as things are, belong to a party. It is impossible to defend a cause except by banding together, and "Have we not a cause?" We must belong to a party, but we must not indulge in party spirit.

It sounds paradoxical, but let us see what party spirit means, and how it shows itself. It does not occupy itself with the great questions at issue, which it will not or cannot understand, but with the little outside matters, utterly unimportant except when they are made into badges and watchwords, and by either attacking or defending these, it renders them outposts around which the real champions have to spend their strength.

Party spirit is equally ready to give offence and to watch for it. It will trail its coat like the Irishman in the fair, and on the other hand will treat the smallest difference of habit as a challenge. It will detect a badge in the wearing of a glove at church, or in making the contraction of Saint, St. or S.

It is the young and eager and the narrow-minded who are most liable to these follies, which really do harm to themselves and their cause. One difficulty is that they do not always know whether a custom is really of importance, or whether it is indifferent. Take this of the word "saint." S. is the more correct in Latin, because it will do as well for Sancta as for Sanctus, but in English is quite indifferent.

So of customs at church. Party spirit looks out, instead of minding its own devotions, for what others do, and takes a note for future discussion of whoever bows or does not bow at certain places, censures in fact everybody who is not exactly at the

level of the observer. And where there is the opportunity it delights to make its own divergence from the ways of the place manifest.

Here is indeed one difficulty, namely, that to abstain from habits of reverence in a strange place may seem a shrinking from confessing our faith before men. I think the only way is to try the importance of the custom by the test of its reason. Kneeling, and bowing at the Name above every Name are commands, therefore must not be given up for any fear or favour. Turning eastward at the Creed is an old habit of the Church, but there are other customs, reverent in themselves, which, among suspicious strangers, it might be well to omit rather than cause them to be mocked.

If again we know that a custom is very strongly condemned by trustworthy clergy, and we do not know the reason, we had better try to learn it. Thus, at first sight the reasons against an Evening Communion do not appear manifest, but a clergyman would show how it is contrary to all the customs and canons of the Church Universal, and how much fitter the quiet fresh morning hour is than the time after the tear and wear of the day.

We are all prone to love the flags and colours of our cause, and it is well. We may have to fight our battle round them. At the same time there is a tendency to dwell on them, and on the catchwords, as if they were the important point. Each party is liable to have both its twaddle and its cant. Emblems to which we give no heartfelt significance and only use out of imitation, phrases caught from others and meaningless to us, these are means of lowering our cause by endowing it with our own silliness, sometimes our irreverence.

Common sense as well as love of our neighbour are needed to try all our habits before we form them.

There is likewise a wholesome reserve which shrinks from obtruding itself or flaunting its badges either for praise or blame. Also, consideration for the feelings of others and respect for elders tend to make outward demonstration be kept back, where it would be misunderstood.

Perhaps the worst manifestations of party spirit are in towns where there are many churches of slightly different shades of practice. The clergy themselves may be perfectly friendly, but the ladies of their congregations are full of rivalship, unwilling to believe any good of the sermons at each other's Churches, critical of the decorations, scornful about the schools and charities, jealous of any benefit given to another parish, as they would not be of another person, and glad to gossip over any story to the disadvantage of the rival Church. If the same opinions as their own prevail there, the hostility is much greater than to one of another school. If it is more advanced, it is continually blamed for "going too far;" if it be more moderate, it is the constant theme of sneers.

The fault is as old as the days when the Corinthians said: "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," "I am of Cephas." It is true that it is well "to provoke one another to love and good works," and that there is a right rivalry, which spurs people on; but the borders of evil are not far off, and the moment we transgress the spirit of love, are pleased at the failures of others, sneer at their shortcomings, and delight in fault-finding, we are in danger.

"Oh! do you know what they have been doing at St. ——'s?" is a very dangerous beginning, and when there is a slighting tone in saying "She goes to St. ——'s," the speaker had better bethink herself. Attachment to our own need not be disdain of others.

The great thing is to depend on principles, not on persons. It is the great difficulty to learn not to erect for ourselves popes or idols, whom to follow implicitly. We must prove all things and hold fast that which is good, looking to our One Great Head, above and beyond all under-shepherds He has given to us. Those shepherds can indeed lead us and aid us, but the entire surrender of our judgment into a spirit of blind partizanship is perilous. Idolatry begins as soon as "persons are held in admiration," and we follow blindly without the honest endeavour to think out and understand all we do, and above all

the constant reference as it were to our Lord in prayer for steadfastness in the faith and a right judgment in all things.

So while belonging to what may be called a party that is distinctly holding to the cause of the Church, we must beware of all party spirit and unfairness, and watch over our dealings with the other side so as to endeavour to keep the "unity of the spirit" by walking in love, and by absence of all bitterness and evil speaking. And where we have to do with the young and ignorant, let us take care that they are imbued with the fundamental truths we hold in common rather than let them only catch up externals.

There is a talk about its being very wrong that there should be dissension about religion. It is said to be contrary to the Gospel of peace, &c., and we are made to suppose that the right way would be to have all articles of faith in some vague solution, and if we differ in believing more or less not to say anything about it.

It is true that it is a wretched thing that there should be divisions, but that is not a reason for not contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. Our Lord, though the Prince of Peace, sent a sword, and when the true faith in Him and in His ordinances is denied, we must use it for His sake as well as our own and those who come after us. Therefore we must stand banded together, and maintain our cause: but our sword is not that of injury, or ill words, or bitter thoughts —it is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the open defence and proclamation of the truth, the living as far as we can up to it, and the foregoing any advantage, giving any offence, rather than deny it. In a book containing many beauties, *St. George and St. Michael*, we are told that to join in an act of worship with one whose faith does not agree with our own is a high act of love of God. This might be true if we had only a God to guess about, instead of Him Who said, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me," and then carried on His revelation of Himself unfolding from Mount Sinai to the Isle of Patmos. To allow that my

neighbour, who does not hold what has been handed down to us from that day by the Church is not in lamentable error, may be very charitable to man, but it cannot be more faithful to God than was a Jewish king's sanction of the high places. Therefore without hostility, or breaking the tie of love, we must guard our faith and our worship by standing aloof from those not of our own Communion, and by thus standing apart we are forced into forming a party. But let not what has been said of this necessity lead us into a light-minded giving and accepting the names of parties. One silly girl will call herself "a tremendous Ritualist" because she likes Church decorations, another will declare that somebody else is "shockingly Low" for not standing or kneeling at some part of the service. There is evil and danger in such ignorant playing with grave matters. If we take our side, it must be because we care for our Lord and His Church, not because we like music and flowers. This would be on a par with saying one would be a cavalier for the sake of the plumes and love-locks.

And if, as some tell us, the forces of the world and of sin are marshalling themselves for that great assault in which, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect, it is more than ever needful that every one who has mind and soul to do so should clearly and definitely master, as far as possible, his or her own faith, and study its details, strengthening it by Eucharists, prayer, and good works, lest it be swept away unawares; and for the same reason all in our power to strengthen and instruct others and to raise a standard for the right should be done. In the present state of the country, matters are carried by demonstrations of power and numbers, and thus the adherence of every unit tells on the mass. Evil may be averted and good gained by the pressure of numbers, and it becomes our bounden duty to give our small weight and let our voice swell the appeal.

In politics it is more possible to divide the right than in religion. Loyalty is a duty, but there have been two ways of reading the word. It may be either faithfulness to the State or

to the King. Cicero and Cato were loyal, though to no king, and Cæsar was the rebel because he transgressed the law of the commonwealth; and in such a country as ours there is scope for two sets of opinions as to the expediency of throwing the chief weight of power into the hands of the upper or lower classes.

A thoughtful woman, accustomed to hear of the affairs of the country, cannot help having opinions and wishes. It is of no use to say she need have nothing to do with them. Individual measures which have so great an effect on the condition of those around her must affect her, and happily they stand and fall much more on their own merits than on party as formerly —in the end, that is to say, for pressure of business and waves of temper often postpone them.

Sympathy with father or husband usually forms the woman's politics. In former times terrible animosities prevailed, and even now a general election rubs up many sores. A lady's part is generally simply to make things pleasant for those concerned with the men of her family, and to act in a quiet way as their helper. But important matters may often turn on a woman's readiness and intelligence, and it is the duty of every Englishwoman, who can do it, to get as clear an understanding as she can of the great points that affect the glory of God and the good of her neighbour, and when she knows her side, to serve it in the quiet ways of elucidation, sympathy, and such other forms of help as she can unobtrusively give. The ready ear and warm enthusiasm of an appreciating woman will make a man go forth nerved for his battle, and a right understanding and glow of feeling for his cause will make her strive beside him to the utmost.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MONEY-MAKING.

THIS is an odd title, but everybody *does* want to make money in these days. Elder people can recollect when it would have been thought actually undignified to make any gain by any performance of a lady, and when, if her talent were too strong not to seek an opening, she would have shrunk from and put aside any payment as an insult.

There was foolish punctilio in this, and it led to perplexities and awkward positions; but the whole tone of mind was a curious contrast to the present, when everybody of every rank is only trying what is the market value of their accomplishments, and all the compunction displayed in the sale and barter of keepsakes and old clothes resides in the warning—"No cards."

I suppose the bazaar system first led to the change of tone, and that the ease of communication through the penny post, with the opening of literature to almost everyone, have all conduced to the present state of feeling, besides the multiplication of good purposes and of needs.

The objects vary, from those of the women who seriously wish for a profession to relieve their parents from their maintenance, through those who wish to raise money for a good purpose, down to those who only "think it would be nice to have something of their own to spend"—nor is this an unworthy motive, if the spending be of the right and unselfish sort.

Let us put in a different category all those who have a profession, whether teaching, nursing, or any other by which an entire livelihood is gained; and speak only of that money-making which is in a manner supplementary, whether used for personal or beneficent objects.

Two principles should be indelibly impressed on amateur

workers, and these are—never to sell inferior work, and never to undersell real workers, who have their bread to win.

Unfortunately, human nature does not recognise its own inferior work, any more than the Archbishop of Granada did that the apoplexy affected his sermons. Whether it can command a market price is really the only test. All that comes under the denomination of bazaar work, even when disposed of in private, but which good-natured people buy when they had rather not, at some exorbitant price, "to encourage the child," to be rid of her importunity, or for the sake of the object, is all a sort of amiable illusion, and another form of begging.

If some new design be imported or invented, and people seek after it for its own sake, and are willing to pay for it, then the gain is probably real and legitimate earning, and it is quite fair to take full advantage of it, before the fancy shops find it out, copy it cheaply, and vulgarize it.

There are things too that can only be properly done by loving hands that can spend much taste and time over them. Such are Church embroideries and *single* illuminations. These cannot any how be done by wholesale or supplied to order, and though Sisterhoods supply Church needlework, there is at this time no fear of an overstock of *good* work. For real goodness is a *sine quâ non*, goodness not only in the design and fancy part of the work, but in the plain needlework and the making-up, the prose of the matter. A chalice veil may have a lovely pattern of embroidery, but just not in the middle, and the hemming may be unworthy of Standard I. in the national school; or a cushion may be in a bright well-chosen pattern but pulled all to one side; or an illumination may be rich as gold and blue and crimson can make it, but with all the letters crooked and a smudge in the corner. These are not right offerings, whether to give or to sell. Conscientious completeness, such as would be required by an ordinary employer, is an absolute duty in whatever work is done for the Church, whether to be given

or sold for its benefit. Slovenly work is dishonesty, and if you expect to sell it for charity it is double dishonesty.

Perhaps we had better look first at the whole principle of "offering to the Lord." The Sanctuary in the wilderness was made of the precious jewels of which the Israelite men and women deprived themselves. David would not offer what cost him nothing, and the gifts his people brought, for which he gave such glorious thanks, were the wealth of a people who wore their treasures in jewels and gold. Mary's alabaster-box was very precious, and the widow's mite was half her living.

No trace is to seen here of its being good to become an importunate beggar even for a religious work, certainly not that it is well to do trivial amusing work and sell it, instead of making some personal sacrifice. Have there not been ladies who would tease their friends for shillings or half-crowns on a collecting card, at the same time that they were ordering a dress costing five times the amount the card professed to raise, and when asked why they did not buy a less expensive garment instead of taking the card, answering "Oh, collecting is such fun"?

There is no pretence at good motives in such a saying as this, but it shows the uttermost abuse of the system. Nor have I any hesitation in condemning the cards wholesale. Mites are not mites unless they are half our living, nor do I believe that a sixpence, or even a succession of half-crowns, given avowedly because they are no sacrifice, will ever bring a blessing on a work. To ask for subscriptions from those who have some connection with the place where the work is to be done is fair and right, but to print myriads of begging circulars and send them round the country to perfect strangers does not seem to me to be the way to do the thing. Would it not be better to spend the cost of printing and postage on the work itself, and wait in faith and something worthy of the name of self-denial?

Is there any ground for thinking mendicancy virtuous? The Orders of Friars who began it had absolutely nothing, but had

come up to the Apostolic rule of holy poverty, therefore they are no example for those who take some work on their hands, and go about begging for its maintenance. Some give, out of their abundance, a mere unblest trifle to be rid of them; others, hard-pressed already by legitimate calls, have to pinch one of these rather than deny the request. The example of doing and giving everything is far more likely to "provoke to good works," and bring in means that will be blessed, than this constant asking.

Of bazaars so much has been said in other places that I will only sum up the objections in short. They are entirely inadmissible for Church building. What is given for the honour of God should be really given in His honour, not through the medium of the purchase of trifles, or still worse, through the gambling of raffles. If you say you must have your Church, and the bazaar is the only way, so you *hope* it is not wrong, are you not forgetting that He Who made the fisher-boy's gift feed the multitude can enable you to raise what He needs for His house if you trust Him entirely, and do not have recourse to doubtful means?

Some bazaars have more justification—convalescent homes, orphanages, and the like, can periodically produce an amount of needlework and fancy-work which with additions from friends may be very properly sold to raise the funds. To this there is no objection at all, if the sale be properly conducted, *i.e.* in a manner that would make it entirely unattractive to the young lady in search only of diversion and flirtation. A fair price and a quiet sale, though these sound dull enough, are the only right ways of doing the thing, and the whole affair is very difficult to manage satisfactorily.

Of private sale I have already spoken. If you can make a thing worth selling, sell it by all means, as a legitimate way of assisting and giving time and talents, but avoid fictitious prices. A drawing that can be sold in an art shop, or take rank in an exhibition, is worth its price; but an ill-drawn monster that can only be sold at a bazaar, or in a basket, is mere trumpery.

Altogether there are many who would do much more for their cause by money-saving than by money-getting—by rigid economy in dress, rather than by poor performances sold at fancy prices. If they remember the penny saved is a penny gained, and use their own needles for what they would otherwise pay for, giving the price to the good work, there would be more reality and self-denial than in buying expensive materials for fancy-work and giving the proceeds. Still, as before, those who can do anything really good—lace-makers, embroiderers, fancy knitters—or who can ride in on the crest of a wave of new fashion, are welcome to do so. Only the great thing to bear in mind is that money is not everything, and that God's blessing is.

When Zerubbabel's poor little temple was being built, God said, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine." But what did He say when Herod's temple was being "restored" in surpassing beauty, and the rich were casting in out of their abundance? It seems to me that money to be spent in ornament, squeezed by all sorts of importunities out of careless uninterested givers, who do not so much as breathe a prayer for its success, is not worth the picking up.

The ways in which young ladies most often endeavour to obtain money are illustrations and literature. Their drawing needs to be of a very superior order to be of any use for the first. It is a great pity that they do not really study drawing more—real, good, artistic drawing—before they attempt it. Hundreds of girls can do figures with a pretty expression and a good deal of feeling, which look in the pencil or pen-and-ink of the first sketch as charming as they can desire; but when subjected to any process for repeating them, come out with none of the air of the original, only with its big head, impossible legs, and dolly fingers. Why? Because the designer has never really learnt to draw, or her eye would never have endured the disproportion which is the ruin of her sketch. In general, therefore, ladies' attempts at illustration are received with distrust by publishers, and the work falls to people who do not

seem to read the tales they are employed upon, or else whose sole idea is to represent a man and woman hand in hand, in the very acme of the last fashion. If ladies would learn thoroughly to draw before they attempt to design, they would be really valuable, bringing their refined and devotional feeling to bear; and they would also be valuable to struggling magazines, breaking down from the impossibility of getting good "pictures," or of getting on without them. But how often does the old proverb need repeating—"Nothing is worth doing at all that is not worth doing well."

Lastly, the gains of writing come into account. These generally do depend on their own merits. A very brilliant name may give a lift for once, and of course there may be a work sold favourably at a fancy price "for" some special purpose, which is only the bazaar in another form. But magazines and publishers ultimately pay according to merit, and the difficulty is, or seems to be, the opening.

Girls hear of (generally in stories) a hundred pounds paid on the spot for a MS.; they write something, send it off, and are wofully disappointed when, if it be not declined with thanks on the spot, it is kept for months or years, and only brings in its small profit when the special original need is almost forgotten.

But is this the way to think of writing? Surely if for every idle word we speak we shall have to give account, it must be more serious still to write what will go forth to hundreds. Have we any right to write what people are to read, and which will, in a measure, leave a mark on their minds, merely for our own pleasure or gain, without pains or consideration whether we do good or mischief?

Of course, if a story is to be natural and amusing, it must have a good deal in it not directly didactic; but there are certain rules that each person ought to make, namely, to consider whether what is written is likely to do harm, or leave a bad impression, *e.g.* it is not right to speak lightly of authorities, or treat governesses as natural enemies, to add

terrors to orphanhood by representing unjust aunts, to connect ridiculous ideas with sacred subjects, or to excuse anything dishonourable.

Something of wit and pathos may have to be sacrificed, but better so by far than leave a mischievous impression. And be quite sure that you have something to say, teach, or tell before you write it, and then write your very best; and take real pains with your English, avoiding slipshod phrases, not for fear of being laughed at, but because it is not right not to do your best; and bad grammar is quite as injurious to your writing as bad drawing to your sketch. No one has a right to write who has not studied a good English grammar, and read really good authors enough to have learnt to avoid the disgraceful blunders that meet us in half the children's books and many of the novels we take up.

Observe, wanting money is not a sufficient reason for writing. It may be a full reason for selling a yard of lace, but not for selling a sheet of words, which are living things, and have an effect. If they are poor, weak, silly, ill-expressed sayings on some sacred subject, sentimental raptures, or unreal, unnatural stories, they do harm, by weakening the cause, and helping to make it despicable in the eyes of the enemy. And, alas! in literature necessity is not the mother of invention, and very few can write worthily who only write, or at least have begun writing, from desire of the payment.

No one can tell whether a talent be an available one without the impartial public judgment, marked by success or failure—can tell at least while the newly-hatched bantling is still dear; though in after years the causes of failure become laughably evident. But if there be success, and the ear of the public be gained, the responsibility is increased, and the rule of only writing as a Christian, with the glory of God in view, needs to be kept in mind, among the temptations to win a wider circle of readers by keeping principle out of sight.

Authorship must never be viewed as a mere trade for gaining money, apart from the duty of keeping the works themselves

up to a high, pure standard that may benefit, not degrade the readers.

I say all this because dabbling in authorship is so universal an experiment in these days, and one that often meets with a certain amount of success, which in the long run depends on power and ability; for if an author cannot write in a style to command popularity, no advantages of connection or introduction will avail after the very first. People will only read and buy what they like.

It is unfortunately more difficult to make an immediate profit of what costs more pains and labour. A translation is seldom acceptable either to a publisher or a magazine, and here let me hint that every one thinks nothing so easy as to translate, whereas nothing is really so difficult. People who can write original sentences quite fairly, entirely fail to see when they are importing a foreign idiom bodily, or failing to render a word. They will call the French navy the marine, and make a German hero childish when he was only childlike. A real comprehension of the niceties of each tongue is required, and in general each phrase requires not to be translated word for word, but to be thought out and reconstructed in English. To translate is most excellent training for oneself, and an employment very advisable for those under any pressure which makes easy occupation of the mind desirable; but it is not often that it will bring in much remuneration, or indeed any, save under exceptional circumstances. But why must everything be done for gain instead of for culture?

Studies of history, bits of biography, and the like, are most useful to the worker. Indeed, I do not believe that much good original work can be done without such studies to fertilise the mind, but they need to be very well and thoroughly done. A life of Mme. de Sevigné must not content itself with saying that M. de Grignan "held some office" in Provence; and many a detail that never appears must be mastered, or there will be some absurd and impossible statement. Except as magazine "padding," however, these papers require to be by a person

of made fame, or to be very brilliant indeed to be very gainful.

Others write for some direct need in their parish or teaching. They find nothing to serve their turn with their own special pupils, and write *to* and for them. This generally goes to the point, and is really valuable.

But the upshot of it all is, that brain-work refuses to be properly done, if the payment be originally the inciting cause. It may become a profession and a knack, but the need of expression must in some way have been the original cause of putting pen to paper, if the production is to succeed.

And when we regret that the poor will do nothing for us without expecting a sixpence, are we not growing rather like them, when we are so very eager for gain that we cannot exercise our talents, or cultivate our powers, without a view to it, even for a good object?

Money is tempting, and seems like the whole means of doing everything, but *oneself* is a greater thing. Our means go with ourselves as part of the work, but it seems to me that there is far too much desire abroad to collect from all quarters, instead of doing *the* work to the utmost of our own powers—praying and trusting to God to bring the help, if it be His will. I do not mean that we should never ask, but I do not think it a duty; and when we are told that it is a wholesome abasement of pride, I cannot see any Scripture example of it. And I am still farther from saying that we should not use our industry or talent to earn what may be needed either for religious and charitable purposes or to supply family needs, but I want such gains to be sought, not in a light easy petty way by inferior, poorly-finished work at fancy prices, but by true, honest, conscientious labour, neither cheating others nor ourselves, and that where that labour is literary, we should remember that it is not simply a matter of so much writing for so many pounds, but that we are seriously accountable for the effects of the words and ideas we send out into the world.

We may be told that our novel will not succeed unless there

is more sensational writing in it, and it follows the taste of the day. But may not there be some who will rise up in the judgment and condemn those who have palliated sin and made it seductive, even like Paolo and Francesca, when they spoke of the romance of Lancilotto?

And as a great consolation for those who feel the terrible heart-thrill to have no power of giving, I would say that one's heart, one's prayers, one's personal labour are far more than any material gift; nay, that there are many cases when the knowledge that gifts come from an abundant store only leads to that careless daintiness which is apt to be resented as ingratitude in the poor, whereas they really and justly esteem that which is afforded to them by the efforts of one little better off than themselves.

CHAPTER XXVII.

STRONG-MINDED WOMEN.

"DOES she go in for being strong-minded? Pray don't be a strong-minded woman." What do we mean by these expressions? Generally, it may be feared that a strong-minded woman is a term for one who is either ungentle, or unwilling to be bound by the restrictions of her sex. It is a piece of modern slang, and it is unfortunate in its effect in two ways; first as disturbing respect for true feminine strength of mind, and secondly as being a compliment to those who "go in" for bravado of mind, not strength of mind.

The real article, if we may so call it, is essentially feminine. Every woman ought to be strong-minded enough not to flinch from her immediate duty, whether it be to rule a family, to rebuke a dependant, to assist at a painful operation, to announce heart-breaking tidings, even to penetrate into scenes of sin and coarseness, if she have a call to seek and save some one there,

nay, to refuse to transgress the commands of conscience under the compulsion of love or fear, and to utter her testimony in season, without fear of man. Without a strong mind, a woman is nothing better than an intelligent bit of drift weed, driven hither and thither by force of circumstances, and totally dependent on her surroundings.

She will worry her husband, be over-crowed by her children and dependants; or if single, she will hang prone upon some friend and probably end by becoming a prey to her servants. Instead of raising the tone of those about her, she will sink to whatever is the level around her, and will continually realize the comparison of the broken reed to any one who leans on her.

Happily there are many whose love gives them strong hearts to bear and to do, and who, though frivolous in ordinary times, seem to change their whole nature in the time of distress or danger. The modern idea of strength of mind, however, includes something intellectual as well as something resolute.

The ideal strong-minded woman—for, like other ideals, she has probably never been found with all points of perfection at once—is supposed to have an aptitude for *all* kinds of severe studies, and to insist on pursuing them on equal terms with men. She will go anywhere and do anything with perfect coolness, trusting to an invisible armour of proof to protect her. She will also say anything to anybody, and never spare her censure or interference for the trifling consideration that it is no business of hers. Her chief dread is of prejudice, and of ancient conclusions, and she therefore thinks it weak not to read all kinds of books, especially the sceptical and the sensational, and the line she admires most in Tennyson is that in praise of "honest doubt." The popular idea of her appearance is that she is tall, grim, gaunt, and harshly strange in attire, but she is much more apt to be in the height of the fashion, and young and pretty, though sometimes she tries dressing artistically and individually, and thus manages to be most conspicuous and generally most expensive.

To men these strong-minded women, or those approaching to

them, are a laughing-stock and a terror. When the strong-minded woman has the graces of freshness and beauty, they are led away by her, vote her "capital fun," and try how far she will go, but they do not respect her, they only see in her a bad imitation of themselves, and make game of her little affectations. When she has no beauty or charm, her pretensions make her merely obnoxious to them, and deprive her of that tender halo of sweet kindness and sympathy that attracts friendship and esteem.

But to please men we are told is one of the most unworthy motives imaginable to hold up to woman.

So in a degree it is, but approbation is a standard by which to judge. That which a man would not tolerate in his sister or daughter is not becoming, and is unsexing.

But this is what the strong-minded woman wants. N.B.—She does not want to cease to be a woman, but she wants to make out that the woman is physically as well as mentally the superior creature, and that she should therefore be on an equality and perhaps take the lead.

To argue the case as to the physical conformation is impossible, but I would just observe that one fact which seems to me to overthrow this theory entirely is that though courtesy, fine clothes, and clearness of skin may perhaps give the woman the advantage in early youth, she is beginning to lose it when the man has only just attained his prime. The man improves as he grows older, provided he leads a good and healthy life; the woman's bloom is a much more fleeting thing.

And mentally, where has the woman ever been found who produced any great and permanent work? What woman has written an oratorio, or an epic, or built a cathedral? It is not lack of education. Women have at times been highly educated, many great men have been self-taught. The difference can only be in the mental texture.

And here comes in that which is said with some speciousness; namely, that women are capable of greater spirituality than men. It is a fine eminence that women claim, and men are ready to

grant them in a semi-contemptuous, yet half-sentimental save-trouble way, which views the spiritual virtues as essentially feminine.

Shame on those who have lowered the idea of religion by such teaching. Nay, they have even so read the Gospels as to fancy that the holiness of Him Who was Perfect God as well as Perfect Man, was of feminine type. They do not see the might of Him Who stood alone, sometimes confronting, sometimes leading a whole populace, winning them so that they were ready to take Him by force and make Him a King, and then stopping their manifestation at its height and sending them away, just when an ordinary leader would have been coerced by their enthusiasm. They do not see the courage that twice cleared the temple of the profane, in the teeth of all the authorities, that defied and denounced the Scribes and Pharisees on their own ground, and that went steadfastly on with Face set as a flint to the end foreseen from the beginning, The intense calmness and absence of all violence have perhaps been some excuse for those who have missed the impression of undaunted, unflinching resolution, and stern indignation against evil; but it is a miserable error, a sin in itself because it is derogatory to the honour of the Lord Who bought us, and false when it alienates from His example as if not meant for men as much as for women.

Struggle hotly and resolutely against the notion, half mawkish, half flattering, that men are not meant to be as good as women, either religiously, morally, or in the way of self-sacrifice. Both are meant to aim at perfection, and to help one another to attain it, and the man, if he chooses and seeks for grace, will attain the higher, nobler type. Woman will not do her part by him unless she really believes this and does her utmost to help him to make the most of himself, not accepting his shortcomings as masculine weakness which give occasion to show her strength and superiority.

But we are told that if we acknowledge our inferiority, and make no struggle for our rights, we induce men to despise us, and thus assist in the weight of oppression under which women groan.

Let us see what this oppression amounts to. An unmarried woman is only oppressed, I suppose, by not having the franchise, and on the whole, I doubt if the lack weighs as heavily on her as the responsibility of a vote would do. In all other matters her sense of propriety is really her only restraint.

It is the wife who is the injured creature. She vows to obey; her property, unless put under special restrictions, is her husband's, he can oblige her to live with him unless he can show strong cause to the contrary, and in case of separation, the children after seven years old are given to him unless he have done something of which the law can take cognizance. To him also belongs the right of appointing their guardians.

No doubt here and there the law presses hardly on individuals. No law can be framed so that some one will not suffer under it; and till recently there were reasons of complaint, when a worthless man could absorb his wife's earnings. Now, however, she can secure them from him, and it is her own fault if she do not. No law can make a woman strong against the man she loves. And thus the marriage settlements which put a woman's capital entirely out of her own reach or her husband's are probably much better for families than if she retained full command over her share. Hundreds of families have thus been saved from utter ruin where a loving wife would have given and lost all that she had.

In the charge of children in case of a separation, the utmost is generally done to come to a just decision as to which parent is the safest for them to be intrusted with. When the decision is committed to the law the grievance-making books assume that it is the father who is always in the wrong and who makes his wife's life intolerable, and then that she has to part with her little ones at seven years old to undergo his bad example. But there *really* are women whose violent tempers and other evil ways have made life unbearable to the husband, who remains looking and longing for the time when he may resume his children.

As to the father's prior power of appointing guardians, this has sometimes been spoken of as a grievance, enabling him to indulge spite or prejudice against the mother, but this must be so exceptional a case that provision need hardly be made for it, and it is surely reasonable to suppose that most men would have a wish for their children's welfare, and be able to judge what was best for them when their own selfishness no longer clashed with the children's interests.

As to the wives who are beaten, no law of equality would make much difference to them. The way to prevent their miseries would be, if possible, to raise the notions of the servant and factory-classes about marriage, and prevent their drifting into it in the reckless godless way which may well prevent them from being respected.

In truth our position entirely depends on what we are in ourselves, not what we claim.

As to paths in life and education, womanhood is no obstacle to our being as highly educated as our brains will allow.

That this should be done in close *juxtaposition* with a number of male pupils does not, however, seem desirable, because there is a tendency in large masses to rub off the tender home-bloom of maidenliness, which is a more precious thing than any proficiency in knowledge.

So too with medical education for women, for which so hard a struggle has been made. An exceptional woman here and there may be so absorbed in science, so devoted to humanity, as not to be hurt by it, but promiscuous teaching could not be possible to the majority, without harm to both parties. Nor have I much faith in the effect of creating a race of lady doctors. Nurses medically instructed would be most valuable, and do much that now falls to the hands of the doctor, but in a really very serious case I doubt the capability of most women to endure the responsibility, especially where it is a matter of resolute abstinence from action. Nurses do indeed often show nerve and decision, but then they have the doctor to fall back upon, and are within prescribed limits.

The watching of a nursery of ailing children, or the daily visit to an invalid old lady, might be as usefully done by a well-instructed lady doctor as by the pet apothecary—but would the old lady think so?

No, except for certain kinds of practice, and for superior nursing, it does not seem as if enough would be gained to make it desirable to outrage feminine instincts, ay, and those of men, by the full course of scientific training.

A person engaged in hospital nursing has told us that the hardening effect of witnessing constant suffering can hardly be counteracted without special religious discipline and training; and how much greater must be the danger of mischief to mind and soul alike in the technical display of the wonderful secrets of the temple of the human body without any special safeguard. We know that medical students often do not come out unscathed from the ordeal, and can it be well to let women be exposed to it?

Such scientific instruction as can be had from books or special lectures would of course raise the character of nursing, and I believe there are ladies trained to watch some special class of illness requiring minute and skilled attention, who are sent to take charge of patients in the country.

This, and hospital nursing, or the charge of workhouse infirmaries, are real professions, as well as outlets for zeal and beneficence.

To become an upper nurse would often be an excellent plan for a lady no longer young, who has perhaps brought up her own brothers and sisters, or nephews and nieces, or has launched her children into the world. Servants are so scarce that she would be taking no one's place, and would be much happier and more valuable than moping and half starving in a wretched little lodging.

And for the younger who need support, it would be well, if they have no special talent, to try to learn to be telegraph clerks, or even dress-making, or whatever is possible in their station.

"The Year Book of Woman's Work" will point to the means of getting instruction and employment, and there is much less every year of the fear of losing caste by absolute labour.

Teaching, of course, stands higher, but nobody ought to teach who has not the power of learning or teaching. If governessing is to be a profession worth having, a certificate ought to be worked for and gained. It will open a sure command of situations either in schools or families, and if greater freedom be preferred, a course in a diocesan college for schoolmistresses will give the complete training required. The Otter College at Chichester, especially for ladies, may enable many to have happy village homes, in which perhaps to receive a widowed mother, while raising the tone of the children.

To these professions may be added those which require a special talent and training—music, art, and literature.

If a woman have musical gifts of a high order, it is plain that they are meant for the glory of God and the joy of mankind. She is bound to use them to the best advantage in these ways, not to win admiration, but to devote them, with God before all, or they become a snare.

Even choir practice and singing of hymns is often a snare, both in irreverence, conceit, and levity of demeanour. Amateur and village concerts are in like manner great delights, and often innocent ones, but needing great circumspection and instinctive modesty on the lady performers' part to keep all as it should be; and when the talent needs to be used as a means of support, the same quiet soberness and refinement must be the preservative, as in fact they are with many a professional singer and music-mistress. In fact, all depends not on what we *do*, but what we *are*.

Of art and literature I spoke in a former chapter. Neither become professions without a good deal of experience and excellence; indeed, except in the case of editors of journals, literature is generally only an addition implanted on some other means of livelihood.

The strong-minded literary woman generally writes up woman's perfections and superiority. Her world is a sort of bee-hive, all the males drones and the single sisters doing all the work. She speaks on platforms, gives lectures, and endeavours to persuade us of the wrongs we have suffered since man had the upper hand through brute force.

It is not of much use to fight the battle and contradict her. If shé *does* accept the original account of the matter, she will only tell us that it was because Eve was more intellectual than Adam that she wanted to be "as gods knowing good and evil." Alas, in this at least she resembles Eve, and let us remember who it was that whispered to our first mother, and "stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made us free."

We have liberty to say or do anything that it is right or reasonable to say. If we do understand a matter, we are listened to on our own merits as much as men are. As Christian women of education, each one of us can take exactly the place she deserves, so long as by a foolish struggle for we know not what, we do not bring opposition and ridicule on ourselves.

To a certain degree the world will always be somewhat cruel to distinguished women. They are flattered up, told it is an honour to see them, their autographs and photographs are sought after, and they are complimented, and then the moment they are persuaded to believe themselves something remarkable, and comport themselves accordingly, they become a laughing-stock. Women are as guilty in this way as men, and it is really an additional reason for keeping in the back-ground, though after all, the discomfort and danger must have been much greater when fewer women wrote, open compliments were the fashion, and there were not such hosts of reviews to give a judgment, not in all cases fair or unbiased, but enough so to give a fair estimate of success.

Nothing but that really strong mind, which is in fact either true humility or freedom from self-consciousness, can bear a woman through these dangers of vanity.

Be strong-minded, then. With all my might I say it. Be strong-minded enough to stand up for the right, to bear pain and danger in a good cause, to aid others in time of suffering, to venture on what is called mean or degrading, to withstand a foolish fashion, to use your own judgment, to weigh the value of compliments. In all these things be strong. Be the valiant woman, but do not be strong-minded in a bad sense in discarding all the graces of humility, meekness, and submission, which are the true strength and beauty of womanhood.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

UNDERDOING AND OVERDOING.

YOUNG people are supposed to improve themselves, but it seems to be the general opinion that marriage, or the ceasing to be young, is a dispensation from what girls call "anything sensible." "There are other things to be done." So there are, but house-keeping takes only a very short time in the morning, except on a few great occasions, or in periodical audits of accounts, &c. Even where small means cause the lady of the house to undertake some part of the work of the house, and all the needlework, she will, at all events in the earlier years of her married life, have a good many silent hours, if her husband be a professional man. And most women, whether married or single, have time to dispose of, which may either be frittered away in busy idleness or turned to valuable account. The great hindrances are want of method, unpunctuality, dawdling and talk. To take them in their order. Method is almost constitutional. Some people are never happy without a framework for their day and week; others feel intolerably fretted by any rule, and are wearied by the tedious vista of the same thing to be done at the same time at regular intervals, instead of when the humour for it comes.

To them, of course, the danger is that the humour for doing the more unpleasant parts of their duty never does come, and that much that is really important is apt to be forgotten and put aside, kindnesses neglected, and promises broken, and "the eyes of the needy" left to "wait long;" while the danger to the methodical is that they are so much jarred by any disarrangement of their routine that temper frequently fails, and bewilderment makes them lose head and presence of mind.

But method is on the safe side, and is above all desirable in those who are in authority. A housekeeper, a schoolmistress or governess, would be totally inefficient without method, and surely the mistress of a house must need it even more.

'It is a discipline too which all who deal with matters of conscience strongly recommend, and therefore should be made a principle, when no greater call breaks it up. A girl, who ever since she left the schoolroom has been at every one's beck and call all day long, and then has had all her habits deranged by her halcyon days of courtship, and afterwards by bridal travels and visits, may often feel it difficult to settle into regularity when in her own house. But then is her time. Most likely; though her avocations are more needful, the arrangement of them is more in her own hands than when she was only one member of a household. If her husband be a busy man, he is probably bound to certain hours, and she knows exactly what time he will have to bestow on her. If he has a good deal of time on his hands, and is apt to want her at all hours, though all plans must be postponed to his pleasure, still it is well to have certain fixed landmarks in the day, to which to persuade him to conform, or that strange wild thing will grow up, a ramshackle household, in which no one knows when anything is to be done, nor where any one is to be found, and there is continual fret and worry to all who do not chance to be born with a reckless easy-going temper.

Let not the young wife be led away by the foolish saying that only tiresome people do things at regular times. Probably she has a good many hours of the day before her while her

husband is engaged, and she will do much more wisely if she resolves against being desultory. If she picks up her work or her book, or tries the last bit of music, just when the humour takes her; rushes out to garden or to shop the moment an idea or a want strikes her, encourages gaddings at all hours with the friend next door, and writes her letters either on the spur of the incoming post or in a frenzy of haste at its departure, she will ere long be weary, find nothing done, and have begun on a course that will not be easy to break.

She will be much wiser, and much less likely to spend a wearisome life of muddle, and of running after omissions, if she fixes with herself certain tasks at certain hours, and on regular days—putting foremost those that she is most disposed to shirk. Domestic affairs naturally are periodical, and good servants are only to be made, or kept, by regularity in all that concerns them. So charitable works (except on emergencies) are better followed out at regular times. Poor people do not like to be visited till they are cleaned up for the day. Even the bed-ridden are disturbed by inroads before they have been put into trim, and no great good is to be done in schools without conformity to their clock-work regulations. And as to keeping up knowledge or accomplishments, these are the first things to sink in the turbid eddy of hurry, while sometimes things undone have to come in to disturb the husband's leisure hours when his wife ought to be free for him.

What is the use of keeping up studies or arts after marriage? some ask. To be an intelligent agreeable companion to the husband; or, even if he be not inclined to care for that, to be fit to bring up children, and to have some real and rational opinion, without adding to the already overtoppling mass of froth of female silliness.

Rational opinions cannot be formed, nor reasonable advice given, by mere intuition, or without more knowledge than is brought from the schoolroom. Indeed, the same facts acquire a different colouring to a matured mind, to say nothing of the progress which is every year made in discovery and research.

To appoint a set time every day for some useful reading would generally be a great assistance in balancing and steadying the tone of mind.

All must be done subject to interruptions, which to some are welcome, to others a trial; but perseverance in some system—not wilfully neglected—will generally be found to give a backbone to the whole body of employment.

Babies when they come are creatures of routine. They have the animal instinct of expecting the same events at the same hours; good nurses promote the regularity, and the hours of attendance on them sometimes are the beginning of regularity in a mother who has hitherto been desultory. It will be much better for her and for them as they grow older, if she have still persevered in some self-cultivation, and not allowed herself to 'get into a whirl of hurry.' Society, charitable business, and domestic cares, sometimes make the lady of the house so busy and careworn that she has no time to know her own children as they ought to be known. And yet, it is really as a matter of fact the idlest people who have the least time, the busiest who have the most—generally because these latter have methods, and really *do* instead of dawdling.

As the girls grow old enough, it is a very good plan for the mother to undertake to hear their English reading. It gives her a fixed time of quiet every day; she can do some of the needlework that is nearly sure to be required while listening, and she can make them read to her books that would hardly be used in the schoolroom, and which do not dwarf the mind as a series of books written *down* are apt to do. Above all she will keep on a level with her children's minds, and not lose her grasp over them. I remember a mother who said of an only daughter, that up to her fourteenth or fifteenth year, she could trace whence every thought or idea the girl uttered came from; and though afterwards there might be the natural shooting beyond of the young branch, the perfect harmony and accordance were never lost between the two minds.

And this could never have been without the link of regular systematic occupation shared together.

Punctuality is, of course, a great element in method. The worst of it is that essentially punctual and unpunctual people are coupled together, to the terrible fret of the former, while the latter are quite callous to the inconvenience they occasion. Each sex thinks the other incorrigible, while probably they are on a par. Men are bound to absolute punctuality by most professions, but they think they may make up for it at home, and are both more sheerly lazy than women, and more apt to be really delayed by unforeseen business, or by those inconvenient people who "come to speak" just at breakfast or dinner-time.

Women are in general anxious to be punctual, and worn and wearied by waiting after they are ready, with all their nerves on the stretch. But domestic matters do interfere with their perfect punctuality, and so does dress. George Herbert might say, "Stay not for the other pin," but would he have liked to see his wife make her appearance in church without the other pin, put in not for finery's but for neatness' and propriety's sake? It is quite true that she might have gone to get ready in good time to stick in all her pins, but a fractious child or a blundering servant might detain her, till the only applicable maxim would be "Better late than never." It seems to me that the office of the lady of the house is to have her machinery—as far as depends on her—perfectly punctual, not putting her guests to the extreme discomfort of hurrying down at the appointed hour for breakfast to find a forlorn dining-room and wait, staring at the family portraits or reading the advertisements in last week's county paper for half-an-hour before any one appears. Presuming the next morning, the unhappy guest at the same hour finds prayers long over, the whole family sitting over half-finished eggs, and the tea and kidneys both cold!

Even if the head of the family be incorrigibly unpunctual, it is still the duty of the lady not to let herself be demoralised, nor to let her children stray off to use the waiting time on

their own concerns, or endless time is wasted by the whole community rushing the one after the other as soon as the signal is given. The best means of avoiding fret of temper for herself and for them when kept waiting, is to keep some specially charming diversion or employment *exclusively* for waiting times, some game, ludicrous verses, or exciting story, such as may brighten the faces, instead of letting them contract with fidget, or lengthen with temper. A piece of knitting, or some kind of work one may wish to finish is a good panacea for the weariness of waiting in the punctual member of an unpunctual family.

Nobody but the elders ought ever to be waited for. Boys and girls should suffer the inconveniences of tardiness, and, if necessary, be punished for it, since it is a serious evil, as every one owns when suffering from it on the part of another, reckless as we are when our own amusement or laziness is the cause of delay.

To be absolutely and constantly punctual is scarcely possible considering the accidents of time and place, but to be regularly and steadily punctual is in our power and ought to be made a duty, both as self-discipline and as doing as we would be done by, yes, and as avoiding many faults.

For hurry is an ungentle state, and leads to hasty words and actions that would never have stained a calmer moment; and how many negligences have not also been committed in the flurry which prevents all recollectedness?

The only wise way is to begin preparations well before the fixed time, and keep the repose or the pleasure for the interval after, entirely distrusting the perilous last minute. On the other hand, we must beware of a nervous fidget which is always too early with everything, and torments other people long before the time with hints that they will be too late. It is generally the safest way to take care to be in time ourselves, but to guard against fussing other people, and indeed to keep our minds as calm as possible and not trouble ourselves about the arrangements of those not under our control. We cannot

always judge of their speed in getting ready, nor of the importance of their occupations, and if they are of the "unready" disposition, worrying is very likely to make them worse out of sheer contradiction and contempt of what seems to them intolerable solicitude.

And even if our pleasure be perilled by their tardiness, we may pacify ourselves by the hope that after all this will be one of their hairbreadth escapes of being too late. Or there is the better consolation of knowing that to be patient and repress all tokens of fretfulness will really be a little victory, a little training in bearing a tiny Cross. It is so, most truly, but in most cases after the first repressive thought of this kind, the wisest way of enduring is to cheat the present vexation and anxiety by some amusement or occupation. To learn to wait is quite as needful as to learn to be in time. For these little waitings are playing at the great lessons of "abiding patiently" and "tarrying the Lord's leisure," of which life is made up. "*L'immobilité est le premier mouvement du soldat,*" and to force ourselves to sit absolutely still and quite calm may sometimes be a valuable preparation for times when "in quietness and confidence shall be our strength," and lives may depend on calmness and stillness. These two are the parents of meditation, so great a help in the Christian character.

Such stillness is essentially removed from dawdling, one of the banes of life. It is not possible for all persons to be equally rapid. The pace which seems tardy to one can only be kept by another at breathless haste. Even among cultivated people, one person's eye will gather up the import of a page in a book at a glance, while another requires to read every word. Thought and dexterity vary in quickness in every one, nay, even at different times in the same individual; but the rule of doing all things with all our might decides the point that whatever we undertake should be carried through at the rate at which we can give our best care and attention, "redeeming the time," and not suffering ourselves either to slur or loiter over our task, however trifling in itself.

Talk is one of the great enemies of living a wise and useful life. It is even more a snare to the grown-up woman than to the child. Nobody hushes her, nobody suggests being seen and not heard, her tasks are all self-imposed, and there is nothing to hinder her tongue from running on from morning to night, to the overthrow of any real employment in herself or any one she may happen to be with.

To many women, especially those who have belonged to large families, one continual stream of purring chatter seems a necessary of life. They are unhappy when alone, and cannot sit at home for want of some one to speak to. And there are others, busy and useful women too, who have no notion of time when they are talking, but who pour forth such a torrent when once they begin that they are the dread of every one. The clergyman, their favourite victim, drops out of sight if he sees them in the distance, well knowing that if he once falls in with them, he will be kept half an hour and be behindhand with all he has to do.

Everybody agrees as to the evils of over-talkativeness, and unfortunately it is the greatest talkers who are most sensible of it, because they suffer most when another of their own kind monopolises the conversation. The lady who said "*Moi, je ne parle jamais de moi*" was a perfect sample of the unconsciousness of loquacity.

And a good deal more is to be said for talk than is generally allowed. Most of the good advice about it seems to think that it is possible to abstain from conversation, or at any rate from everything that is not improving, and rules are laid down that might be followed in a convent, but certainly not in a family or in society. An unreasonably silent person, who will not entertain nor seem to be entertained, is a burthen and a distress, though the error is a less harmful one than the more common failing. Perhaps it is only those who had rather hold their tongues who are safe from over-talk.

The difficulty is for the grown-up person to know when it becomes excessive in herself after the age when no one dares to

call her to her face a chatterbox. Some years back a reporter, whose proximity to a party of ladies prevented him from catching the speech he had come to hear, took an excellent revenge by writing down the scraps he caught interspersed with the chatter behind him. It was a good lesson on talk at unfitting seasons. Indeed one would hardly believe how impossible silence is to people who ought, from age and position, to know better; if one did not see and *hear* them whispering at concerts, public meetings, and alas, even at church. To be absolutely silent at such times is always courteous, and sometimes reverent.

Sometimes, when people of a higher class patronise entertainments to which they think themselves superior, they either assert themselves, or try to find diversion by whispered wit and criticisms, interspersed with half-disguised laughter. How ill-mannered this is need hardly be said, and yet how many young —yes, and older people too—will fall into it!

And the tongue that is not controlled really loses the power of stillness. Therefore, it is much better never to let slip the schoolroom training in silence over occupation that needs attention, or that will be unreasonably prolonged by chatter, such as letter-writing or serious reading. I believe it would be much better for grown-up girls and their mother to sit together silently and steadily employed in the morning, than for those to whom silence is necessary to have to seclude themselves in their own rooms with their business. It should of course not be grim compulsory silence, but a tacit mutual agreement not to disturb one another, a sociable silence, so to say, which is a much greater token of intimacy than talk. A few other times it would be well to mark with absolute silence, such as the walk to Church before an early Celebration, such decoration of churches as is done in the Church itself, and when girls occupy the same room, the time after their private prayers at night.

The time while going to bed is sometimes the only opportunity of confidences, and every woman knows how sweet those dressing-gown conversations are, so, within rational limits as to lateness, they become a "time to speak"—but after the prayer

has closed the day, there should be no more chatter in or out of bed.

> "We to Thee ourselves resign;
> May our latest thought be Thine,"

is not compatible with a renewal of the interests lately discussed.

Spaces of silence only add zest to the conversation. Meal times, and all the leisure hours that belong to recreation or to the amusing of others, will be all the better and brighter for the tongue's having had some stillness, the ideas some recruiting.

Conversation is emphatically an art to be studied for home consumption. "*Tenir un salon*" is the highest accomplishment of a French lady. To keep her own drawing-room in this sense should be the aim of the mother of a family, above all for her own circle. To teach her boys and girls to take their proper places in brightening up the home and contributing to its pleasantness, to keep down jarring elements, to turn off gossip, check ill-natured stories, confute exaggeration, and all good-humouredly and without apparent interference, is one of the most unassuming and yet the most valuable of motherly arts.

Talkee-talkee seems to some to be the whole of female life, and it is certain that conversation is one of the greatest enjoyments of life, from the refined and lively intercourse of the choicest society down to the old village dames' wagging their chins over their saucers of tea.

Moreover, almost all the good we can do is by our words, not, of course, half so much by direct admonition as by the tone and manner in which we handle every subject, those utterances that are really a part of ourselves. Therefore it is a duty, besides doing as we would be done by, to share in conversation, and talk with full spirit and interest. But to avoid over-doing in quantity, it needs to be very observant of others. Are we talking them down? Do they seem bored? Are there indications of a wish to escape? Are we occupying them when they must wish to attend to something else? If we do not look out

for tokens like these we may be making ourselves very troublesome nuisances.

Overdoing is the great habit of our day. We cannot have a fashion but it is exaggerated to caricature pitch; we cannot have a new game but it is trumpeted forth and overworked till everyone is sick of it. If we give a party, it is crowded; and whatever we take up is so immediately assisted by all sorts of facilities and inventions that we are fairly carried off our feet and driven on beyond our intentions.

To be thoroughly occupied and employed is almost necessary to the happiness of an energetic nature, but it is hardly possible that the casual and extraneous work will not pour in, which goes beyond the limits of the convenient and possible, and ends by making time all one drive and race. If this happen only at intervals, and on extraordinary occasions, well and good; but if it is the normal habit, it is wiser to drop or delegate some of the works, if possible, rather than continue at the rushing speed, which must break down and destroy all calm and "recollectedness." That love of doing everything ourselves, and thinking no one else can do it, is a great snare to those who have "faculty." Perhaps the *inner* side of it (if we may call it so) is best shown in "Joyce" in F. M. P.'s *One Year*. If unchecked, that spirit runs on into the masterful woman—a very obnoxious personage—who directs everybody, from the clergyman to the shoeblack; and with the utmost simplicity describes the superhuman exertions she has made to come to your assistance when you are only wishing she had stayed away.

We are all of us ready to say we could not grow into so dreadful a person, and yet it is quite possible to any one who has an energetic, active nature, and a dash of self-importance and self-confidence. As soon as the temper of patronising and directing develops itself, in young or old—in the daughter of the parsonage, the lady of the manor, or the benevolent old maid—there is nothing for it but "a grain of humbleness," to consider, as St. Paul bids us, others as better than ourselves, and then to "order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters."

If our advice or aid be needed, lowly and reverently let it be given, and let the dread of domineering be before our eyes, so soon as age or station puts the temptation in our way. It is not simply because it makes us absurd and disagreeable, but because it is absolutely wrong to thrust ourselves into matters that concern others, and to attempt to be one of "many masters." Suggestions are all very well, but vehement enforcing of them, or manifestations of displeasure when they are not adopted, or the conviction that our way is the only right one, are no part of lowliness. This busybody spirit is one of the reproaches of good women, and a sore trial to the clergy in contact with them. Let those whose conscience smites them with some overbearing moment pray for the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

Yes, life consists in first being stirred to do, and then learning how to do. We sometimes seem to rush out of leaving undone what ought to be done, only to do a great many things that ought not to be done. To timid and indolent natures it seems the safest way to do nothing. For it is easier to avoid all exertion on behalf of our neighbours than to begin only to find that we have encouraged an impostor, easier to delegate authority than to have a battle with an ill-tempered child, or to dive into a fathomless well of half-truths making one great falsehood, *much* easier to stay at home in our drawing-room than to consult with ladies' committees, be doubtful whether we have acted right, and perhaps have all our pains sneered at, and decried by our family as fancies and hobbies. While, if activity be a pleasure to us, there is the continual need of holding it in check, avoiding whirl, or if whirl comes to us, trying to keep calmness and judgment in the midst, and letting others have their due turn and weight in management. It is a perplexing world that we live in, and all that is plain to us is that the sitting still doing no good work is no more safe than the laying up the talent in the napkin was, and that we must be content to struggle on with our work, blundering and floundering on, as it were, even at the best, foiled in our schemes, or finding out their

ill success; submitting to repression we think ill-judged, or else finding we have ridden rough-shod over the humble counsel that we wish we had followed, learning by sad and bitter personal experience that we are indeed unprofitable servants, yet

> "Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
> Is He sure to bless?
> Angels, martyrs, prophets, virgins,
> Answer yes."

CHAPTER XXIX.

HEALTH.

How different is the lot of different households! There are some that go on year after year "wholly at ease and quiet." Their children scarcely know a serious ailment; they grow up, go out into the world, and marry, and still the parents can count their flock unbroken; no lamb is missing from the roll-call, and they begin to count up in thankfulness, but in trembling tones, years of undimmed peace and joy,—happy, indeed, if prosperity has made them more loving, more grateful, and rich in happy memories to bear them through the years that must come.

And others have struggled with unceasing anxiety and sorrow, with disease ever at hand, maiming the young lives even when it spares them, leaving gaps in the circle and aches in the hearts of the loving, and rendering life one course of suffering, and a continual round of precaution.

Such extremes as these are not common. Fair working health is the ordinary rule, though there is nothing more unequally balanced than the amount of comfort or discomfort with which people go about the world. A habitually ailing person will go through the business of the day with a head

and back that would entirely disable and terrify the strong and healthy, and not unreasonably, since in them it would probably mean serious mischief, while the other knows that it is only her daily cross, to be borne patiently and cheerfully, and not likely to lead to anything further.

It is a truth, or truism, that it is right to take care of the health. Yet it is a saying of the Anglican comfortable order, and would be utterly denied and scorned by any mediæval saint who would view the keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection, as meaning that the poor thing was to be neglected, misused, and in short treated as *l'ânesse*.

The Port-Royal nuns died like sheep in the malarious atmosphere, and no one saw any harm in the shortening of their probation on earth. Faith was strong, and saw in sickness only a cross, in death only a release, and deliberately postponed the body to the soul as deliberately as we postpone the soul to the body, and view it as a heinous offence not to do exactly the thing best calculated to keep the body in high condition. Nay, if the transgression be only an imprudence for pleasure's sake, it is easily forgiven; but let it be for a religious scruple, and there is an immediate outcry.

To keep the body, as far as lies in our power, in good and effective order and working power, and to avoid what we know to be harmful to it, or likely to bring on an illness, is, of course, a duty. Imprudence is an actual sin when it is wilful recklessness and disobedience; and it is often an act of true self-denial to submit obediently to such precautions as interfere with enjoyment—avoiding damp grass or evening chills, and enduring laughter from others who can venture on the forbidden liberty. The lively and high-spirited suffer a good deal of vexation, and endure much wholesome discipline when thus forced to consider delicate health; but, on the other hand, it is quite possible to make health a sort of idol, and an excuse for doing nothing but what happens to be easiest and most agreeable.

It is almost impossible to lay down general rules. With

some girls neither frost nor damp does harm; a walk in pouring rain only gives a glow to their cheeks, and the only thing that does seem to try them is being shut up in the house all day. It is well for them to rejoice in their strength, and make the best use of it, cultivating hardy habits by avoiding the little indulgences that are not needful for them, keeping their bedrooms cool and airy, and taking plenty of exercise, though even for them some precaution is needed. It is wiser not to take walks of extra length more than occasionally, and to be thoroughly rested from one before taking another; and indeed, where fatigue is hardly felt or acknowledged at the time, subsequent harm is often done by want of moderation in exercise, such as strong, high-spirited girls will often take in rather wilful disregard of the warnings of mothers and aunts. Wet feet do not always injure everybody; but it is never safe to presume on former escapes; and no sports ought ever to be permitted that may keep the delicate or thinly-shod on dewy grass in the evening. For those who are strong, the hardiest and simplest habits are the safest and best. Avoiding chills, and using warm clothing enough, it will generally be the best way to use cold water in the morning and warm at night as plentifully as possible, and to avoid stimulants. Those who start as water-drinkers have a great advantage in the benefit that in time of need any extra strengthening gives them. But some are too delicate, some too weakly for such treatment, and the vigorous alone can profit by the freshness and activity it gives.

The healthy are very apt to disdain and laugh at their careful companions, and tease them for coddling, little knowing the penalty and danger of the hardihood that comes so naturally to them; how the damp walk is at the cost of a perilous cough, and the draught brings on neuralgia or rheumatism. Such girls sometimes exercise absolute tyranny in their love of air and scorn of coddling, and their laughter makes it much harder to the conscientious friend who is already afraid enough of "being tiresome," in taking the needful care of herself.

But fresh air is life, and it is a happy thing that most

educated people of the present generation have learnt a due esteem for it; but those who love it best must learn to act with consideration. Those who suffer from heat and cold are not quite on equal terms, for in general the damage done by cold is much more serious and lasting than the discomfort of a close room or a closed railway-carriage, which, at the worst, can only cause headache, or even faintness.

In youth, obedience must rule; afterwards, it ought to be true that every one after forty is either a fool or a physician.

A certain amount of time is really necessary for getting acquainted with one's own constitution, and gaining experience of what it will bear; after which our common sense and discretion have to avoid trifling with it, and at the same time to guard against making the body too important. Sometimes to run a risk would be folly; at others, to avoid it would be selfishness.

There must be a due and seasonable regard to probable consequences. The risk of a serious attack on the chest is a very different thing from the certainty of a bad headache of the nervous order. The one requires the sacrifice of what would otherwise be a duty, the other often is bravely faced and endured.

Many of the best and most earnest works of charity now in hand are actively carried on under the pressure of constant suffering and ill-health, and it will be often found that, though no one has a right to do that which has been said to be directly injurious, yet a brave struggle not to be made useless has resulted in the lightening of the load.

The continual depression of a low condition is one of the trials that comes to many. Children show it in a perpetual fretfulness and crying, and their elders sometimes envy them for their power of indulging in tears. It is a very bad sign when every one seems to be unpleasant. A clever old lady once said, "If one person is cross, I suppose he is out of temper; if two people are cross, I still think it may be their fault; but if everybody is cross, I go to my medicine-chest."

Then it is that we, like her, must decide that the fault cannot be in everybody at once, but in our own temper and spirits; and while using remedies, we must keep a good and careful guard over thought and word, and do our very best to keep the peace, and take a cheerful view of things. When we become conscious of being in this mood; nay, when we are accused of it, and feel most persuaded that the cross one is the speaker, we had better keep that resolution, which is the best cure for the spirit of contradiction, not to oppose except on second thoughts. Probably it is the lot of more than half the world to go about and do their work in life under the pressure of undefined or defined ailment, needing a continual exertion to keep good-tempered and active.

In most cases resolution, and an endeavour not to be disagreeable to others, is the best remedy. It is much better and wiser not to give way unless we have been told, or know from experience, that serious consequences will result from disregard of such discomforts. There are symptoms not to be neglected, or fatal illness may be the consequence, and the merest trifle may seem quite as distressing at the moment. But if we give way to the unimportant indisposition, and nurse and make much of it, we give it an advantage over us, we occupy our minds with it, magnify it in imagination, and, besides the immediate duty left undone, we disqualify ourselves for future exertion by promoting languor, laziness, and nervousness. Moreover, it is often possible that the very exertion, by turning the course of the thoughts, actually works a cure.

Remember, too, it is a very suspicious circumstance when an ailment makes a duty seem intolerable, but shrinks into nothing on the announcement of a pleasure. It is quite true. Our nerves and our wills, or whatever they may be, in this strange frame of ours, are so mixed up together, that even when we hate ourselves for it, we get well for what we like, and the only revenge we can take is to force ourselves to do the thing we don't like, whether we feel up to it or not, and if we once

begin to do it heartily, it will be as good a cure as the pleasure.

This is not advising any trifling with health. No one has a right to do that. It is too precious to be sacrificed to carelessness wilfulness, fashion, or amusement; though sometimes there are higher services that require it to be disregarded. A child nursing a sick parent, a wife accompanying her husband, and again, those who are called to work for God's service, often have to put their personal risk of damaged health out of the question. It is all a matter of comparison, duty, and obedience. Sharp local suffering is to some people more, to some less, disabling, often according to its frequency, but something depends on the endurance and sensitiveness of the individual nervous system. Thinking about it as little as possible is, as usual, the most practical way of enduring. Such occupation as may be possible should be sought, and though submission to the cross, and prayer for relief or for resignation, must underlie everything, yet cheerfulness should find support and outlet in the interests around, the sympathy of friends, and the little alleviations and amusements to be found.

"There is no such waste as to pity oneself," as the old nurse said; and it may be a wholesome recollection to many called on to endure pain, from a toothache up to the truly severe suffering that falls to the portion of some.

The same rules apply when Church rules or religious observances are in question. If a fast really disorders the frame and leaves bad consequences, the "abstinence" must not be from solid food, but if it only produces a little depression and yawning that is only a sign that it is a reality. Or if kneeling produces faintness there *may* be real cause for giving it up; but in nine cases out of ten it will turn out to be merely from casual exhaustion, from heat, or fatigue or nervousness.

Nerves and hysteria in all their forms are the great perplexity, for the suffering is real, and yet is almost viewed as unreal. In general the tendencies (before the malady is confirmed) are best dealt with by resolution on the part of the victim or her friends.

Quietness and an endeavour to occupy the attention will sometimes ward off an attack, and to make a change and avoid the associations under which the suffering has occurred is a help. Morbid nervous fancies about oneself, frights and frets, are often cured by some great excitement that entirely takes us out of ourselves. But engrossing occupation, above all in the cause of the poor and suffering around, must surely have the same effect, if tried for their sakes, not our own. Locality has an effect on health and spirits that sometimes causes a difficulty. It is a great trial to feel better, lighter, more active, and therefore more good, wherever one's station has not called one, and to find dreary "all-overishness" and general depression awaiting one in one's appointed home. Here, again, is one of the points for duty and *unselfishness* to decide. If there is nothing to fix one to the place, of course it is best to go where one is most strong and efficient, but even then it is not wise to encourage a restless, vague temper of roaming. If we cannot be well in a bracing air, let us try a warm one; if relaxation unstrings us, let us try brisker air; but when two or three places have disagreed in the same manner, and we are simply weary of them, it may be as well to question whether the wandering habit is a good one, and whether settling down to lose the thought of self by finding interests and ties might not relieve some part of the ailment.

And where the vocation of father or husband lies in the very atmosphere most depressing to the daughter or wife, and she can only freshen herself by an occasional holiday, it is indeed a trial, and one often met with brave fortitude and patience. The restlessness that unsettles him is often absolutely kept under, and sometimes prayer and patience succeed in fitting the back to the burthen, the health strengthens, or some change of house makes all the difference. Any way, when it is a clergyman's wife who finds her husband's parish disagree with her, she should be very careful how she lets herself interfere with his duties. Not only is it a grievous thing to carry him away from his parish, but serious temptations to faith and doctrine sometimes

beset clergy forced to become idlers, which would never have befallen them in their full career of work.

Of course when physicians say it is matter of life or death, of recovery or lingering disease, and when there are means for a journey, the matter is taken out of the patient's hands, and it is a duty to obey. But when the means are wanting and the move is well-nigh impossible, there is much compensation and comfort in resignation, in the being spared the farewells and the journey, and an invalid will do well to look resolutely on this side of the question, and remember there is no restraint to the Lord to save by an English winter or by a Mediterranean one. Yes, let those who cannot spend what they would like on advice or on remedies for themselves, or their dear ones, remember that unlimited power of this kind really often increases the harass and worry by bringing in conflicting opinions, and fretting, and wearying the patient with long journeys and endless experiments, often in themselves distressing and painful.

Much the same is to be said about advice as about change of air. It is reasonable and wise to consult some medical man of eminence when our ordinary attendant has evidently exhausted his resources without effect, but after that, it is much better to tranquillize oneself, and not wander from one system to another with vain impatient expectation of a cure. If ill-health does set in, though of course we must "give place to the physician" and obey his directions, the only way not to be a burthen to ourselves and all around is in the double meaning of the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, submission to His will and doing it, first accepting the Cross and then thinking of it and oneself as little as possible.

To use all means for the preservation of our own health and that of others is almost a branch of the Sixth Commandment. To do our best to prevent carelessness such as imperils life or damages health is a clear duty. No one ought to rest contented where there are any tokens that sanatory measures are needful, though nothing is so difficult as to accomplish them, and those who meddle in them are thought fanciful and meddling.

However, the spirit of the age is in favour of this branch of the subject, and the matter is likely every year to become easier, since every epidemic generally causes some place to take the alarm and look to its drains.

But people ought to be reminded that unselfishness or dislike to complain and give trouble must not make them keep silence about unpleasant smells or ill-tasting water, for the consequences of silence may be very dreadful.

When the epidemic has begun its course comes the question of infection, and this is, as usual, to be judged by good sense and unselfishness. A morbid horror of infection is selfish want of trust in God, and a reckless exposure of oneself is equally selfish, and is tempting Him.

Most people being in all probability franked against all the common epidemics they have once had, except, perhaps, scarlet fever, may reasonably venture among them if any good purpose is to be fulfilled by so doing in the way of nursing or consolation, but this never should be done without precautions against carrying away the seeds of contagious disorders in the dress to those who have never had them. A doctor's orders in this matter are *never to be disobeyed.* Young ladies are apt to have a sort of contemptuous antagonism to the doctor, and to think him an ally of those at home, who would make them useless, and thus they defy his rules, and rush from one cottage to another, perhaps carrying infectious fever in their woollen dresses to a person in a state to whom it is doubly dangerous. Why should they carry it, they say, when the doctor does not? They may depend on it that he arranges his visits so as not to go immediately from the fever case to the other, or that he has used some means of lessening the infection. Disobedient imprudence of this kind has sometimes done fatal mischief, and also retarded and caused mistrust of the good cause for a long time after.

Those who have never had these disorders will generally do more kindly by keeping out the way of them; though, if they find their care necessary, or have incurred the risk of infection

without knowing it, they will do most wisely to throw off self, think as little about fears and risks as possible, leave it in God's hands when they say their prayers, and go cheerfully about their work, whether it be that of common life or of nursing. Whether they are to be ill or well, this will be the best preparation.

There are many books, such as Miss Maurice's *Sickness, its Trials and Blessings; Sunshine in Sickness; Our Invalids;* and above all the Abbé Henri Perreyve's *La Journée d'un Malade*, anglicised as *From Morning to Evening*, which treat of the spiritual way to endure long, permanent, and severe sickness; and there are others on nursing, entering into the practical details of care. On these, therefore, I will not enter, for these books are written from practical personal experience, such as no healthy person can really have. I would only pass on to remind those who have an invalid in the family of the great care and consideration needed.

The invalid of books, who lies on the sofa ready to do everything for everybody, and to hear every care and trouble, is an excellent ideal for the invalid herself, and is often so carried out as to make the sick-room the care and centre of the family.

But all invalids have not the free head and nerves, lively spirits, and unfailing temper, required for such a post to be easily fulfilled. Heads and nerves will be shaken and need silence, backs will be jarred by hasty or heavy steps, or fidgety hands playing with the couch, attention will flag to the best devised amusement, and the young brothers and sisters will go off declaring that their patient is so cross there is no pleasing her, and then, when she could be amused but has no energy to amuse herself, they are all gone, and she is left to utter loneliness.

The great thing to learn in such invalid companionship, is to follow the will of the patient instead of your own, not to be despotically bent on carrying out your own views of what is diverting, and to manifest neither surprise nor disappointment at the failure of any plan of yours for giving pleasure. Do

not think it is unreasonableness or ingratitude when your favourite plan is received languidly, and what has cost so much trouble to procure is put aside with feeble thanks—if any. You little know what an oppression your very eagerness is, how great the disappointment may be in having no relish for what has been looked forward to, nor how much effort there has been in squeezing out those thanks. Very likely the capacity for enjoying and the gratitude will come in a day or two; but on the whole the love is best that takes kindness as so natural that gratitude seems uncalled for.

At the same time, the power of creating variety, and inventing resources, either for comfort or for amusement, is a great benefit and gift; but the great thing is to watch the right moment, not force on your invention. Talk when it is likely to be a pleasure, and not only when you are eager; and make it your business whenever you go out, to bring something home to enliven the prisoner, be it flowers, or leaves from the lanes, or descriptions of scenes and adventures, or scraps of news. Many a dull call or disagreeable interview may become a great entertainment, if rehearsed with liveliness and drollery. It seems as if the most ordinary sense would tell us such things as these; and so they will, if we give our mind to them, and yet people are strangely thoughtless, above all, when unused to anything like permanent illness. They take no pains not to tread heavily; they lean against the couch and shake it as they talk; they mend the fire noisily, and scrape the cinders with a worrying sound; they leave the sun streaming in, or blinds to "come tapping" with distracting monotony; and if any favourite friend be sitting with the invalid, they flock in to enjoy her society, forgetting that even if they do not destroy the only chance of a *tête-à-tête*, they oppress by their numbers, and consume the air that it is not always easy to renew.

When outsiders come to see a sick person, there should be strength of mind on the friends' side to shut the door when the visit would be wearisome, and there should be rational kindness on the part of the visitor so as not to take offence on the score

of jealousy. "Some other person was admitted—I was not! I will not go again." Probably that was the very reason! One visitor may be a benefit, two a fatigue.

Throughout it is the same story—leave self behind, and you will do well. And to the invalid, whose *self* is so painfully present in pain, weakness, or lassitude, shall I venture to say anything that has not been much better said in the books I mentioned?

Yes, one word I will try to say. Perhaps you are grieved at feeling yourself so unlike the gracious invalids you read of, so loved by all. You feel it very hard and neglectful if you are left alone, yet you do not know how to bear with the others when they come, and you are glad when you can manage to be only dull, not snappish. People petted you, and thought nothing too much for you, when you were very ill; now that ailment is permanent, they are getting tired of you, when you really want them.

There is nothing for it but to dwell more and more on Him, Who is shutting you into your chamber to commune with Him. Dwell on His Love and His Sufferings for you, and you will find it easier to give the love and sympathy that will draw others to you. And do your best to be of use to some one. Your work may be for the poor; you may make scrap-books, or dress dolls for children; you can do easy matters the busy have no time for; you can be their memory, send kind messages, or a share of your dainties to other sick persons, or write letters that sometimes are much valued. It is the old story so often enforced in parable and allegory—our cross grows lighter so soon as we set our hand to aid in bearing that of another.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOME.

THE Altar and the hearth! Well may they be coupled together, and well does Wordsworth in his "Lark" describe the faithful heart as—

"True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!"

Home-making is perhaps the most essential of all the duties of womankind. Above all it belongs to the wife and mother, but it often falls to the lot of daughter, sister, or aunt, and woe to the family that has not a home-maker in its housewife! Men can seldom, if ever, make a home by themselves, and though they can live their lives without a present one, sometimes rising above the need, sometimes falling below, it is seldom that there is not either in memory or in hope, some precious spot that has been—nay, that still is the home of their affections, or to which they hope yet to attain.

Home need not be a fixed spot. Wandering families of officers, &c., who spend their lives in a succession of furnished houses, yet contrive to carry about with them a perfect sense of home that is wanting in some houses whose owners might almost look down on Domesday Book.

And yet there are palaces with a core of home, and single back rooms in lodging-houses which have that in them that holds fast the heart of the inhabitant.

What is this element of home? Is it not above all that of being the place where one is always welcome, and above all sure of sympathy and ease? A place to gravitate to, not merely as one to eat and sleep in and serve as a shelter in case of illness, but the place where, in spite of all love of change or society, one always comes back as the dearest and pleasantest to us, whatever may be its disadvantages.

It is woman's work to make such homes, as the safeguard and earthly anchor of the men she is connected with. While the family abode is merely an uncomfortable place of running in and out for meals, without any common centre or general united family life, they will bestow themselves and their time elsewhere, and too often not innocently.

The forlorn places are generally where there is no mother, and the eldest daughter is unequal to the position or careless of her duty; but, even where the mother is living, there is dreariness where she is too gay, too querulous, or too indolent to make home pleasant enough to keep her children from flying off in all directions, dreading nothing so much as domestic dreariness, or still worse, domestic wrangling.

To make a really happy home the father must co-operate with her. If he is thought of with terror for his temper, or if he cannot or will not tolerate his children's interruptions, there will be less peace and gladness, but still the mother can keep up the home element if she gather the children round her, keeping him and his requirements foremost in her own estimation and the children's with the dutifulness of love.

The hardest task is, however, that which falls to a widower's daughter, who has been left too young, or too much imprisoned in the schoolroom to begin at once on her mother's death to take her place, and who has to reconstruct after her father has learnt to despair of finding happiness in the family, and her brothers have acquired rough, careless fashions of treating their meeting-place. In fact it should be the great endeavour of any person who is put in charge of a newly motherless household to help the eldest girl to take up her position as centre from the first, and to infuse into her the sense of responsibility as companion to her father and sympathizer with the boys, so as never to let the continuity of home be lost. There was a story a few years ago in the *Churchman's Companion* called "Regent Rosalind" which showed, much better than any discourse, how a sensible and motherly girl can line again the shattered nest of her home.

The wife has the great advantage of beginning from the first. Her husband has married her to make a home for him, and looks to her as the brightness and joy of his house, and her children are one by one born into it, and look to her with a natural loving instinct which can only be thrown away by her own fault, in either neglecting or overdoing her duties.

To her, home-making is from the time of her marriage her paramount earthly duty, and as long as husband, sons, and daughters need her, all other good works and even extra indulgences in devotional habits must be kept subordinate thereto. It is not so essential that she should sit on ladies' committees, preside at mothers' meetings, hear lectures, or even attend week-day services, as that she should prevent her husband and sons from being alienated from a fireside with no one to greet them, or her girls from being formed by stranger hands.

If she have really free time, or can make it, by all means let her so use it, and this is often the case, but always as an object secondary to the welfare and comfort of home. What has been undertaken when there were no children, or they were smaller, may have to be dropped when they require more attention. Of course good works are not to be dropped entirely; no one can be in a wholesome state who does not live in the constant exercise of deeds of love to the poor, and the children have to be trained to them, but the charity of a wife and mother is truly bound to begin at home.

If charity has to be made secondary to home, how much less there is to be said for gaiety and love of society. Moderate variety, pleasant intercourse with friends, and interchange of visits there should be in most cases; but when there is a shrinking from the dulness or disputatiousness of an unbroken evening, and when the girls are often left all the evening to schoolroom undress, and the boys to find what sport they can among the servants, and engagements are so frequent that no one knows how to spend a day without company, the precious homeseed has been thrown away. A lady who makes her drawing-room

so gorgeous as to be only fit for receptions, drives off her husband as effectually as the poor woman who receives hers with her one chamber all over half-dried linen and soap-suds.

If the poor woman is wise and energetic she will have her work done, herself and her room tidy, and her husband's supper and chair ready for him, and if the rich woman be equally rational, she will leave her reception-rooms for the days when she must fill them, and keep a cheery family apartment for common life and ease—where a shooting-coat is not out of place, and where children can play in a civilised manner.

From the palace to the lodging-house, the great essential of home, which the true woman will create as surely as a bird will build a nest, is a living room that gives a sense of comfort, cheerfulness, and pleasantness. The cottage kitchen, tidied up before "the master" comes home from work often fulfils this office to perfection, but among the womankind principally addressed here, it is the drawing-room that generally answers the purpose, or, in some large houses, either the library or the morning-room.

The having too many rooms is, however, a disadvantage in home feeling. No room has a thorough atmosphere of comfort that is not lived in and worked in, as well as used for visitors and for the evening place of assembly. There is sure to be a stiffness and formality about it, and nothing that is wanted can be found. It is certainly convenient to have a room "to make a mess in" or to carry on an occupation such as will not brook interruption; but if everybody is away in boudoirs and morning-rooms from breakfast to luncheon, when there are visitors, and the drawing-room is left blinded and tenantless, it will never be comfortable, and when guests tie down the denizens into sitting there, they are all stiff and dreary together.

When the wife takes possession she will make herself and every one else more at home if she sits in it for her morning avocations, not deserting it except for anything unusually untidy, which makes a litter beyond bounds. Her furniture has, I hope, been chosen by herself, unless it be inherited, and

even then she will give it a character and individuality. Architectural furniture, professionally adapted and chosen, seems to me simply fitted for puppets, not for living and breathing men and women who connect themselves and their histories with their surroundings.

If the lady of the house is sitting there with her book, work or letters, she will get on much more comfortably with the callers than if they have been shown into a flapping blind or a dull fire, to glance at the prim circle of wedding presents on the table till she is fetched down to them. If her furniture does lose its first gloss a little sooner, it is more comfortable for all parties. Everything brand new together is trying. Freshness is a different thing from newness. The husband will be sure to like better to find his wife ever ready for him in her drawing-room than to have to hunt her from up stairs whenever he wants her. And when the children come, the drawing-room should be a place of honour and enjoyment to them, but of self-restraint enough to make them "behave themselves discreetly." The furniture need not be sacrificed to them nor they to the furniture. A child can learn often before it can walk what may be touched and what may not; and there can be always extra toys and books produced in the drawing-room alone which render the time spent there a pleasure as well as a privilege, which should be ended on any misbehaviour. Self-restraint and domestic courtesy are two great elements in home joy, and these, to be consistent with ease and freedom, must be acquired from the first. Therefore, rudeness, boisterousness, quarrelling, and ill-temper should be met by instant expulsion, and so should all ill manners, whether shyness or forwardness. Children should be warned that if they will not behave properly to visitors they must not stay in the room, and the personal remarks of the *enfant terrible* should be demolished as improper, and never so repeated or laughed at that he can learn to take a pride in them.

Of course it is better that young children should be only for a short time every day under the constraint of drawing-room

life. The garden and nursery are the place where their limbs and their voices should have free play and full enjoyment, but an increasing length of time of quiet civilized life and superior society is needed as they grow older.

No time for this is better than that of meals. The most homelike families are those where the meals are taken together, and the children after learning to comport themselves properly share in the conversation merrily, but like reasonable creatures, and can listen as well as talk. Most mothers do have their children to make their early dinner at luncheon-time, and bring the lesser ones down for the subsequent hour to play in the drawing-room. The other meals are too late for them, and since dinners have come to be so very late, they have destroyed the family evening. The mother can have the children with her till the bedtime of the very little ones, but the elder ones have to return to the schoolroom while she goes down to dinner, and have very little chance of seeing their father.

The families certainly seem the most thoroughly homelike and comfortable where the family breakfast is early enough for the children to join in it, where the dinner is early, and the evening meal "high tea." It is not always practicable, when the master of the house is out all day, though some busy fathers prefer calling their evening meal tea, that they may not be entirely cut off from all social life with their children.

Most men have, however, such a rooted dislike to the system, that, as the comfort of the husband must be the wife's first object, she cannot introduce it. Some ladies too, and a great many schoolboys, are absurd enough to imagine early dinners unaristocratic. Where the custom is established, the mother will indeed hardly be able to carry it on, unless she can make her gentlemen confess that the eatables are quite as good and agreeable as if they had come in regular courses.

When "late" dinners were at what we now view as the barbarous hour of five or six, they did not break up home half so much, as they left an hour or two for the children to come down and amuse themselves quietly under their parents' eyes,

be played with by their father, show him their performances, or perhaps be read to by him.

Nothing so binds a party together as some employment and interest in common, with which memories get associated, and round which hang family sayings and family jokes remembered long after. Thus, readings, music, and games are excellent means of gathering and keeping together the whole set in a way that is much safer and better for growing young people than when they retreat in parties, of twos and threes to chatter in nooks in the schoolroom or smoking-room. Except on those long summer evenings when the twilight garden is full of charms, all the young people should be considered as "due" in the evening; but not for dulness or vacancy. There should always be something pleasing in hand for them, in which each has some place, so that they would miss each other, and feel unwilling to make a gap.

Of course there are interruptions and breaks, from calls without and duties to friends and society. The best friends are those who amalgamate with the home life, and love it, and indeed it is a great mistake to treat guests as "company," and give up all occupations for the sake of entertaining them. But the home is a happy one where, though there may be plenty of fresh taste for society and amusement, they are enjoyed as variety, not as a relief, and the great delight is in the eager rehearsal of all that has been seen or done. Indeed such homes are rather apt to breed a spirit of family exclusiveness, which has not much toleration for outsiders, and is slow to admit them; growls at interruptions, and contemns all that is unlike the circle at home.

There is not much of this narrowness left now. Perhaps it was a better extreme than that which at present makes young ladies be found anywhere but at home, and prompts them to pour into any ear they suppose confidential, the wrongs and errors of their disobedient parents, and all that they have to tolerate and endure—till they can almost think themselves persecuted! They would not after all be like this if home had

been home to them, and if their father and mother had not let them get out of their hands for want of cherishing, fostering, and training in their own mould.

The sons, who only come home periodically, need the influence even more. But the way to make their home a true anchor for their hearts is not to let the holidays be an orgie of indulgence, riot, and discourtesy; but to accept the boys as reasonable creatures, returning to their old places in a loving home, and give as well as receive affection and sympathy.

Toleration of bad or selfish habits, or the sacrifice of one part of a family to another does not tend to make a home enjoyable. Willing *self*-sacrifice does, but not the immolation of other people. There must be justice, and everyone must have his or her due place and security of rights; each ought to be a part of the machine with a sense of usefulnesss, and thus it is well very early to assign little offices to growing girls, which become charges and duties, such as giving out stores, arranging flowers, feeding pets, or even stamping letters, or finding and posting newspapers sent on to friend, hospital, or missionary.[1] Anything that takes them out of being mere schoolroom machines, and makes them members of the household is valuable.

But after all these are only external details. Nothing will really make a home but keeping the first and great commandment, and the second, which is like unto it. These alone can make happy homes of peace, and of innocent mirth, precious in thought to the very last breath.

The women who come from such homes make others; not only in the full perfection of a family, but true women will make a home of the rooms they live in—perhaps as a party of sisters, the remnants of a family, who gather round either the eldest or the strongest, and make their abode—albeit smaller and poorer—seem that of their childhood still, "a household

[1] A very great act of kindness, especially with weekly papers, such as the *Guardian* or *Illustrated London News*, only they must be sent within the week if to go abroad, or they are stopped.

nook, the haunt of all affections pure," and often a haven to young people who have no other sympathetic resting-place.

Where such a homelike nest is open to young men whose profession keeps them at a distance from their kindred, the effect is often to preserve them from many temptations, and save them from being hardened for want of some safe place where to spend leisure moments.

A bright fire, or cheery window with flowers at hand, easy chairs for the weary, and an air at once of calm and of the freshness of occupation, the pervading sense of kindliness and refinement,—these constitute no small charm to those who are roughing it among men and to business men, and though the instant love sets in, they will follow it away from the old friend, still, as long as it does not come, they will often be thankful for a resort where no "intentions" can be suspected.

Even the solitary woman will make her sitting-room homelike and enjoyable; alone, she will people it with shadows like those in Longfellow's poem, and she will be ever ready to welcome those who come to rest and refresh themselves in the calm that her quiet dwelling makes, when their own are full of the cares and joys of life; or the lonely will seek to her for relief. And she will listen to each in turn, and open her stores of sympathy for those who rejoice and those who weep, and yet it is not change or variety she seeks or needs, for she is never happier than when alone.

With her the long absent brother or son, returning to find the old household broken up, and scarce a relic remaining, in a new room, and strange place will still cry—

"It's home, an' it's home, an' it's home."

For the old aroma will be there. Yes, home is sweet home; and yet

"E'en here may lurk a snare."

The exclusiveness mentioned above is of no great importance. It is only a form of loyalty, and though sometimes it makes

young people *farouche*, sometimes conceited, for a time, it is quite certain to rub off in a few years, and those who have it are less likely than others to stray into such folly as silly love affairs.

Idolatry of home is more a temptation to the parents than the children, for in fact it is the parents' nest, and their reign in it is the choicest time in their lives. They have made it, and are ruling it, as nearly as they can, up to their ideal, and it costs them a pang whenever a nestling thinks of flying, or dares to think that any perch beyond has a more extended view.

That sons should go out into the world, and daughters marry, parents know is in the common course of things. They do not murmur at that—unless they are exceptionally foolish or selfish—though the match-making mother is far less common in real life than in books; but it is their nature to glory in seeing their daughters happy wives, and only a father here and there indulges an absolutely morbid and selfish dread of losing his daughter from his side.

But when it is not marriage, but something higher that claims the children, the solemn words of our Lord as to the renunciation of home delights have to be considered and duly weighed both by parents and children. False vocations and mere restless fancies should indeed be combated, and time and reflection should be insisted on, but fathers and mothers should bear in mind that it is an awful responsibility to insist on son or daughter serving the world and themselves instead of embracing the direct service of God. The young people may be sure that disobedience will never be blest and must submit; but the parents will find that after the repression (if it has been selfish or ill-judged) the home they valued will never be the same again. Clerical duties and calls stand above other claims. It is home idolatry that would tie a clergyman down to the neighbourhood of his parents when he is summoned to harder or higher work elsewhere; it is home idolatry still more which insists on his conforming to hours and family traditions that interfere with his work.

Home is a treasure. Its training is precious. Its value is immense both to the young and to the busy, harassed man, who can do battle with a full spirit, refreshed and supported, if he have a home to strengthen and enliven him, where his cares are laid aside as reposed on his wife; and yet it is but a step.

"Sweet is the smile of home, the mutual look;
When hearts are of each other sure,
Sweet all the joys that crown the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure;
Yet in the world even these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast,
Once gain the mountain-top and thou art free;
Till then, who rest, presume,
Who turn to look are lost."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE WORLD.

"I RENOUNCE the pomps and vanity of this wicked world."

We ask our little children what this means, and the young lips make answer that it is the fine and gay things of this earth; and if the young brains reflect at all, they decide that these pomps and vanities are whatever is finer than they possess themselves, and that is possessed by some one whom they do not like. Happily for them, at their age they have a great deal too much faith in father and mother ever to suspect that the pains taken that they may look nicer than Mrs. So-and-So's children may have something to do with the vanity of this wicked world!

Happily! Yes, faith in parents is happiness. And yet is not that faith abused when they hear mamma triumph in their dress having excelled everybody else's, and in their complacency gaze round the church and plume themselves on the results of

the comparison, or set their small hearts on some bit of finery? And mamma would open her eyes with amazement if she were blamed. She would say a little girl's pleasure in dress was natural and harmless, and that it is her own duty to make her children nice. She could not bear not to have them nicer than other people's.

Ah! there's the rub! Nicer than other people's. It is the rivalry that brings in the world here.

And yet again, the world is so mixed with the claims of duty and affection, that it is almost impossible to tell when we *are* doing our duty, or when we are being led by the world. I am very much afraid that a large proportion of fairly good and religious people, if suddenly told that they had renounced the world, would reply that they had done no such thing, and would tacitly confess it to be impossible without going into a convent.

As to not being conformed to this world, if the words were quoted to them, they would say, "O *that*—" and there break off, and look for an answer, not exactly liking to dispute it and to express in words what is conveyed in their tone—"that might apply to the Romans in St. Paul's time, but it can't be meant for us, and only an unreasonable person would press it. Besides, are there not extremes to which we never went, nor had the opportunity of going? We never bought 300-guinea shawls, nor sets of diamonds, never gambled, never went to three parties a night, never committed any of the sins we had no mind to. Fashionable people, who have very gay seasons, are conformed to the world, we are not."

Nay, but why does our friend the defendant wear such a mass of false braids on her head? Because she must be like other people. Why has she a poor helpless cheap governess for her girls instead of giving them a thorough education? Because it is necessary to keep up appearances, and be like other people. Why does she dress her children in unnecessary feathers and ribbons, and give the smallest sums her position demands to parish charities? Because she must be like other people. Why

does she encourage that disreputable young man about the house, among her growing daughters? Because he is an Honourable, or, may be, because he is heir to a fortune. Nay, why does she make much of that cross old lady? Because she is a baronet's daughter or a knight's widow, and it is gratifying to be intimate with her.

The world's conscience is on a sliding scale, shifting with public opinion. Sometimes, when "religion walks in his silver slippers," it demands a very large amount of religious observance and expenditure, and is rigidly hard in exacting propriety of conduct. But at other times this same conscience tolerates vice, cruelty, dishonesty of all kinds! And it is in reality so difficult and unusual to have an original conscience that Bishop Wilson may well bid us pray to be delivered from the "vices of the age and place we live in."

And this conscience of the world's not only varies with periods of time, but with classes in society. High life has a different code from the middle classes, and they again from the poor—nay, each parish, each family has its own public opinion. Nor is there anything against which this conscience of the world bears a more tyrannous hate than the rare original conscience. It is dreadfully scandalized at the presumption of setting up to think for oneself, and avoid practices good enough for one's neighbours. Ever since Abel's sacrifice was accepted such differences have been intolerable, and must be put down till—till they are found to be too strong to be quashed, and then to be reputable and satisfactory, whereupon the world adopts them, and does its best to corrupt and poison them.

The world is, I suppose, the most present and subtle tempter of the respectable and good. It has worked up a set of duties, which it really is so impossible to disentangle from the duties of one's station, that one scarcely wonders at those who gave up the whole effort, and fled to convents, or, finding that there could be a world there, retreated to solitudes.

For to ourselves we can make a world out of the presence of

the best and holiest if we act for his praise, and show off for his approval, rather than with thought of God alone.

When our Lord spake His sermon on the Mount, He stormed the world in its citadel. And what do we do with that sermon? We praise it, we think we love it; but whenever a phrase is brought home to us, we say it is an Orientalism; and one of the great endeavours of our lives is to prove that serving Mammon is the way to serve God.

But what is to be done? We are born into families. We have to take our place, and fulfil our duties in them. There is no condemnation of ordinary social life; but the rules given in the New Testament imply the existence of society, and the division of classes. In what sense then are we to make "I renounce the world" a truth instead of a mockery, and to be really "*in* and not *of* the world," a saying quoted by so many, without considering what it means.

First let us see what are the principal branches of the world's temptations. Perhaps they are to be defined by the baptismal vow, "the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them." Sometimes it may be feared the very choice of the sponsor who utters the vow proves that the parents are following and being led by them.

The vain pomp may be taken to mean all matters connected with display of any kind; the glory to mean fame, honour, and opinion, and the covetous desires, all seeking for wealth, rank, or station.

Display then begins with the child. Vanity in dress is the first temptation to most girls, and even when they are exempt from it as children their mothers have it for them. Exultation in their beauty is a loving motherly instinct, but it would be well if this were all. Mrs. Gilbert had the good taste to say that the prettiness of little children was best seen in the simplest of dress; and the real sense of mankind agrees with this, for what raptures there are over a tiny child in its little petticoat! The velvet frocks, broad sashes, delicate lace, the fashions

ridiculously imitating grown-up people, are sometimes only bad taste, and that form of affection which shows itself in giving its darling the best and most costly; but too often there is really worldly display in them, and pride in sending out the child on the public walk to eclipse as many others as possible with its finery, or at any rate not to be pitied, scorned, and wondered at for its simplicity.

When a child is dressed cumbrously or unhealthily because it is the fashion, or so expensively that more needful outlay, or charities, are sacrificed to it, there is vain pomp in its attire. And when it knows it is got up to be admired, and is encouraged to be pleased with the exhibition, seeds of mischief are sown for ever. There is a natural pleasure in a pretty thing; but that should be kept apart from the desire to be admired in it, or because of it. Nobody ever should admire a child or its clothes before its face. If a mother is wise and sensible, she is only distressed at such food for vanity being administered; if she is otherwise, we need not add to the child's vanity. Sunday freshness and constant neatness should alone be impressed on the child for whom we have renounced vain pomp.

Again, it is said that in places where young ladies' schools abound, the style of dress is kept up to an expensive pitch by the rivalry—not only of girl with girl in the same school, but of school with school as they pass one another in their walks, or see one another at church; and yet some of these schools at least teach the catechism. The French *pensionnaire's* uniform would be far better than this, or at least some rule that the dress should not go beyond a certain style. But people are not in the habit of thinking a girl's vanities wrong—unless they are offensively visible, or offend one of the world's tender points, its purse.

The books she reads, even the better sort, do all they can to encourage these same vanities by their descriptions of "fairy figures," "golden curls," "violet eyes," unconscious attitudes that entrance some beholder, dresses which the writer has dwelt on *con amore*, grand houses, and little lords and ladies, all so

arranged as, in spite of the supposed moral, to make beauty, dress, and rank appear the *summum bonum*.

Probably most little girls do indulge in the dream of how delightful it would be to find oneself Lady Edith or Lady Alice; but it is well if they have a strong interior consciousness of their own folly in wishing it, and are not maintained in the belief by observing mamma's pride in a titled guest or any connection with the nobility.

Yet ranks are to be acknowledged and treated with their right amount of respect, whatever it be, that the society of the time imposes. All outward tokens of courtesy that are the due of persons of rank ought to be paid; but when they overpass that just due, and the desire of intimacy or profit influence our attentions, then begins servility, and the world again is "telling on us."

So when we are led by example or habits of society into what simple sense of right forbids, is not this the world once more? Those untruths which pass as a mere habit; those questionable amusements which we permit ourselves or our families; those omissions of devotional observances, or practices lest somebody should be offended, because we don't set up to be better than our neighbours, or lest we should seem to censure somebody else—what are these but snares of the world?

And the difficulty is terrible, for some of these things are recommended by our elders, or by those we respect—nay, they are sometimes enjoined as matters of obedience; and they blind the eyes and blunt the conscience, so that those who were dragged into such customs against their clearer sense in early youth have, by the time they are free to act for themselves, become habituated to them as second nature.

When thoughtful young people or simple children startle us by some question, "Why, is this right?" it is a terrible responsibility to set to work with specious arguments to prove ingenuous first impressions mistaken, "very good in the dear child," but to be got over.

The people whom general consent calls worldly are only those

whose pursuit of rank and wealth or position is too evident, and perhaps too successful to please their neighbours. One may be quite as perilously worldly when one's sole purpose is just to lead a comfortable life, standing well with society, and falling neither above nor below its standard. If we must needs have champagne and ice at our dinner-parties because some one else has, and we cannot be outdone, though we cannot properly afford the style these involve, can we be forsaking pomps and vanities? If we pine for a carriage, not as a convenience, but as a badge of grandeur, what then? Or to ascend a little in the scale: is there any truth in the allegations that ladies persuade their husbands to go into Parliament, not for any desire or comprehension of their duty to the country, but simply to gratify their own vanity, to enjoy the honour of the thing in the country, and to have a house in London? Does no clergyman's wife ever give her weight to the scale of self-interest rather than duty, and dread offending a patron or a rich parishioner? And when "good introductions" are talked of, do they not generally mean what will lead to society of rank and wealth?

The vain pomp and glory of the world are closely linked with the covetous desires of the same. Generally, indeed, they are a sort of flower or blossom of wealth—the very means of displaying it; as when display is thought to win confidence and attract notice, or when daughters are dressed and sent into public to attract suitors. To enjoy luxury and make a display is perhaps the usual English notion of wealth. Witness the workpeople, whose first stage above spending their earnings in drink, is to lay them out on finery and furniture, while the French of the same class never increase their material comforts, but love to hoard.

The view of the necessities of each station does differ a good deal in the two countries: whether for the better or the worse may be doubtful. Comfort and cleanliness are so much more valued in England, that they require a different amount of labour and expense; and whether it be bad taste or frankness most English people value wealth more for what it gives in

distinction, luxury, amusement, and ornament, than for the sense of possession. Public opinion is against what it calls covetousness or avarice. It expects that a show should be made for money, and is altogether averse to any stinting, being entirely of the opinion expressed in the 49th Psalm: "So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." Indeed, it will praise a considerable amount of liberality, provided it costs no self-denial and is no rebuke to any one else, when blame, in the most sensible, regretful voice, is uttered.

How to have an unworldly conscience in this matter of covetousness is another difficutly. Views on the matter change with life. Young people, who have never felt care, cannot imagine themselves growing anxious and saving in their age, and, without realizing what they mean, will sometimes declare that affection is everything, and they do not care for riches, and sometimes will long for large estates, with castles, horses, jewels, power of travelling, &c. Their mothers have perhaps only learnt what money means after their marriage, and, while striving on themselves, among anxieties present and future, cherish wishes that their girls may "marry well;" *i.e.* richly, and begin to forget the dreams of their own youth, or to dissuade husband or son from the higher, purer course. Or, may be, let their minds dwell on the advantages of wealth till speculation, or even more doubtful means, are tried. Duty to one's family is indeed duty, but it is very, *very* hard to disentangle it from the claims of this world. No wonder St. James makes one-half of pure religion to consist of keeping oneself unspotted from the world!

How is it possible to keep from following the drift? Two or three books have been written lately to startle us, by showing that the true likeness to Christ is absolutely impossible in the modern world, or can lead to nothing but martyrdom. But they beg the question. Their ideals are made to do what their Example would not have done in their place; *i.e.*, the schoolboy who refuses at the command of his master to mention the

name of a Greek god, entirely forgetting that he was trying to resemble One Who was obedient. Again, we are told no one can be sincere who does not lay down all his goods, like the first Christians at Jerusalem; but when we look into the matter, we find that this was only done by the first Christians at Jerusalem in their new fervour. It was enjoined on no one, save on the young ruler, who no doubt was seen by the All-seeing Eye to need that crucial test, "if he would be *perfect*." Indeed, it looks much as if the fall of Ananias and Sapphira had shown the Apostles that ordinary characters could not be safely subjected to the test; and both in the Gentile churches, and in the Jewish, in the time of St. James, people evidently retained their possessions, and yet "the world" is ever as much our enemy as Satan himself; and as our blessed Lord had to encounter its allurements after He had overcome the desires of the flesh, so its temptations lie ready for those to whom the common sensual pleasures have little attraction; and to others it gilds their baseness and grossness. The world infused itself into the Church even in the times of persecution; how much more when there was no danger to sift out the half-hearted, and when nothing was to be lost, but a good deal gained, by keeping at a certain level of religious profession!

The practical question seems to be how to keep the world out of our conscience, so as neither

> "For pleasure, wealth, or power,
> Our heaven-bought soul to sell,"

and to keep our eyes clear to see that what is offered us for our birthright is really nothing but a mess of pottage, and that it is not our pressing duty to take it.

I believe the only way is to resolve against anything our instinct objects to, and not listen to any excuses in its favour. If we begin by persuading ourselves that what we wish cannot be really wrong, and may under the circumstances be done, we are acting as Balaam did when he kept the messengers.

There is a necessary obedience to parents and to husbands.

but where the will is allowed free play the only safety is in giving up the doubtful. "Let every man be *fully* persuaded in his own mind." Weigh prevalent customs by the scales of truth, not by general consent. If you think a fashion indecorous, and even foolish, do not conquer the feeling because other people adopt it. If the expense be beyond due limit, let nothing persuade you to transgress. Imitation does not improve the matter. If you recoil at the first proposal of some popular amusement, do not let example lead you to it, still less run about trying to persuade some one you respect to say something in its favour that may restore your self-approval. Never omit what is right for fear of offending some person with whom vanity or self-interest makes you wish to keep on good terms. Never withhold a protest against evil because it is done by those from whom you hope or fear something. Whenever duty to God and the claims of society clash, put the right claim foremost, and do your best to keep from any longing contemplation of those advantages which you fancy wealth or rank would bring, but rather dwell on the absolute blessing and glory of poverty, showing it all honour and respect in others.

Again, it is surely the safest way to avoid putting oneself forward for display, or trying to do what we excel in for the sake of admiration. The right medium seems to be to do what we are asked to do, and as simply and well as possible without any fuss—to use our talents really and truly for our neighbours and not ourselves. What *comes* to us of itself within certain rules is generally safe to do; and so, again, is the amount of society that is thrown in our way, corrected always by considerations of expense, and by attention to the seasons of the Church, and likewise of the fitness of the thing; but in all this, we can but return to what we started from, namely, that the conscience is so easily perverted by example, persuasion, self-interest, or, on the other hand, by love of singularity and desire to produce an effect, that the only safety lies in constantly referring every decision to the rule of God's Word and Commandments, and

dreading nothing so much as the twisting and distorting that Word to suit our own code, or persuading ourselves that the living oracles of God are not meant for the present state of society.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AUTHORITY.

DEAR old Miss Matty was heard to observe that there were not so many old ladies in Cranford as there used to be when she was a girl. There may possibly be a delusion of this kind in my impression that either the last generations must have faded much faster than women do now, or that society has become much more merciful; for whereas in most old-fashioned novels the heroines ranged from fifteen to eighteen years of age, and ladies of twenty-five or thirty were absolute old maids who made themselves absurd by pretending to youthful airs, in the present state of the world a woman, whether married or single, would be ridiculous if she did not keep in the ranks of youth up to thirty, ay, or five-and-thirty. In this northern climate, beauty, unless marred by illness, anxiety, or dissipation, generally increases rather than lessens for the first half of life. There is an exquisite bloom in some fair girls of seventeen, an apple-blossom-look of innocence, which, under *un*favourable circumstances, does not last two years, but under favourable ones, will continue for years. In general, however, English women are better looking at seven-and-twenty than at seventeen, and have seldom begun to fade at seven-and-thirty, if all have gone well with them.

When the parents live on in health, spirits, and efficiency, the daughters never seem to grow older after they have once come out of the schoolroom. They are still "the girls," and neither they nor their parents, nor any one else, is inclined to think

them otherwise. It is only when they see their nephews and nieces growing up round them that they begin to find themselves of an elder generation, and to recognise the fact that, by years at least, youth is past.

This is the way with tranquil lives, especially with those who have superior parents to whom heart and head can loyally look up, and in these the happy period of tutelage lasts even to middle age, with the freshness and usefulness of spirit it preserves.

With others, womanhood comes early. Sometimes the sickness, incapacity, or death of a parent, force the daughter to come forward and leave her no youth at all, or love affairs come early and unprosperously, or some great family shock matures her. Girlhood can really take no thought for the morrow; other heads fix for her what may and may not be done, and cheerful acquiescence is all that is wanted of her, but womanhood has to take responsibility, decide, and govern.

In early life the vigorous among us long for this responsibility. We think we could do the thing so much better than we see it being done. We are so ready with our censures and advice. We think ourselves so wasted in a subordinate position. We talk so recklessly, half because we know nobody will mind us. All on a sudden promotion comes. We have to try. Either we have to organize a new foundation, or we have mounted up to the seats of office in our own little sphere, or come into one in another place; or we suddenly find that our words have weight. We may have been wont to speak as one of the rabble of the family, wishing and censuring, grumbling or castle-building, with the comfortable freedom bred of our minds having no weight, when we find them actually taken into consideration, and producing an effect! Sometimes this effect actually startles us, if the grumble was only a grumble, not meant to be acted on, nor to make any one uncomfortable, but merely to relieve our minds. It is the old story—the family Whigs turning Tories and coming to the top.

Sometimes when we thus begin to act for ourselves with our

own contemporaries, there is an odd sort of feeling (even in the midst of grief) as if what we were doing was somehow unauthorised, and wanted confirmation from our elders before it can become valid.

Be it how it may, the time of responsibility does come, and we have to assume authority and to rule. One counsel it may be well to give to those who have to take up work already in progress, but new to them, namely, not to be hasty in bringing innovations that are not necessities. It was the advice Dr. Arnold gave a fellow head-master, saying, that whatever changes he had made during his own first year at Rugby he had regretted. No one can tell without experience of the individual working of any machinery,[1] what necessities the lack of theoretical perfection may be to meet. And besides the dismay and opposition produced by sudden alterations by a new comer, it is quite possible that a little real experience will show that they would have been mischievous. We much recommend to the consideration of those who are going to have authority in a new scene, that story of the Rev. F. Paget, entitled "*The Curate of Cumberworth*," where the zealous youth enters on a parish where he must needs set something to rights, and can find nothing to meddle with but the church-clock, which accordingly he puts wrong.

Often young brides come in, just a little spoilt by the petting and other charms of the courtship, and too often prepared by the general drift of opinion to see in the mother-in-law a foe and a rival both in influence, affection, and power. Half shy, half jealous, frightened and deficient, eager to feel themselves mistresses of the situation, anxious to try their rights, they know not one quarter of the pain they inflict, nor how often it is resolutely hidden, rather than cause disunion. Public opinion generally goes with youth and joy, but a little tenderness and consideration on their part towards her who asks nothing but to see her son happy will save many a heartache to all, and so will a little humility, and recollection that much

[1] *Vide* Mrs. Gatty's excellent parable of the Organ-pipes.

which seems to the new eye dull, antiquated, or belonging to some barbarous age, may be very dear and precious to older ones, and that to root up is much easier than to renew.

Many a good, right-minded, well-intentioned clergyman's wife or daughter sows thorns in her path for years to come by her persuasion that a dark age preceded her coming to the parish, by expecting every one to be delighted by the changes they can barely endure; and by speaking compassionately of the late incumbent, who has still their reverent love. Let the charities appear to be on the most pauperising system, let the harmonium bray and growl, let the Sunday-school system run counter to every theory or practice of your own, and hold your peace, or only speak out your mind on compulsion, and when you introduce the improvement do it gently and humbly, and not triumphantly. When people have learned a little confidence in you, they will go along with you in your changes and see the need of them; if, on the other hand, your own experience does not prove that many would have been hasty and ill-advised. Those old incumbrances, sexton, choir-leader, schoolmaster, parson's man, whose deficiencies are so glaringly evident to you, may have merits you little know of, and a little patience on your part will prove whether they are improvable; or if they cannot rise to your standard, and voluntarily retire, it is far better than if you discarded them and pensioned them off on your first impression of their incompetency. And oh! beware of a whisper, even to your dearest friend, "Before I came things were so and so." With the very best and most affectionate intentions, she will glory in your success and set up everybody's bristles.

It is no injury to you if they do love what is gone before, nay, it is a pledge that they will be loyal to you when their allegiance has been gained. Yet, after all, love and allegiance are not to be sought after. Your duty is to be true and faithful, and to let the law of kindness sit on your lips, and then no matter about what comes of it.

But it is quite certain that when people go about talking of

ingratitude, they have done something to hinder gratitude. Either they have done nothing for their neighbour, or they have spoilt their benefits by lack of love.

> "Alas, the gratitude of men
> Hath often left me mourning."

Assumption of authority comes naturally to some people, and is a terrible effort to others. When position requires it to be asserted, it is needful to lash oneself up to do so, and it is a great comfort that reproofs seem to be effective almost in proportion to the effort they cost. The reproofs of the nagging or scolding nature are like the wind that blows, while the rebuke given gently and with pain, even timidly, goes much further, from its very rarity, provided the speaker be in full earnest.

To take the proper place, and exact due respect and obedience, may be very unpleasant, but is an absolute duty. It is no kindness to those who depend on us to let them be familiar, negligent, or insubordinate; they are our charge, and it is our duty to fulfil it, in a considerate, and not in a slovenly, manner.

If the question be asked, how are we to know when to come forward without being assuming, surely sometimes position settles the question, and at all times, if there is something to be done, and nobody else can or will do it, Providence is calling us, and "as our day, so will our strength be."

Mere matters of dignified presence, "faculty," or readiness of speech, often mark out the person who can become manager, and if she be absorbed in the business and not in herself, others will follow her as cows follow their senior out of a field; for there is so little originality in the world that most people are glad to imitate, provided they do not find it out. The really clever head will direct either openly or through others if only it be a humble head, and keep in its right place. For the less able, who have to act, will repose upon it for aid and suggestions, and the guidance will fall to it, as "the one indispensable person who knows all about it."

As things stand in England now, smaller country places have their tone given either by the squire's wife or the clergyman's, according to the circumstances or birth of one or the other. Such places are generally much more peaceable than those where there is a kind of republican equality, and some dozen or half-dozen ladies are jealous of one another's claims, the richest, perhaps, being looked down on for having come of relations in trade, and the one with the most ostensible rank being of lowest birth; while the truest lady of all hangs back disgusted at their jealousies, the most effective is the most domineering and distasteful, and the clergyman's wife is too poor, or sickly, or oppressed with children, to reckon for anything.

It is a real blessing when some one of undoubted position either by rank, wealth, or standing, comes among them and can take the lead naturally; nor should she hesitate to do so out of indolence, shyness, or false humility, for the influence of station is really a talent committed to her trust, and a little quiet decision in an unassuming way saves an infinity of jangling and uncharitableness.

There is nothing against humility in so doing. The great practical portions of St. Paul's writings make our conduct hinge on our office as members of Christ, parts of the great Body, the component parts of which have to act in harmony. One of these rules is that we should each think of ourselves "soberly as we ought to think;" that is, with a just estimate of our position and what is required of us. Observe, this does not mean what we should think beneath us to do for those who need it, but when it is our place to undertake direction and management. To abstain from what is questionable, and promote what is good, is a personal duty in all cases, but what as girls we may have done with doubt and timidity, as women must be done openly, and giving reasons.

For instance, a good conscientious girl may quietly and steadily refuse persuasion to have her fortune told, to witness any of the perilous tricks connected with spiritualism, to go to

races or pigeon-shootings, to read a "delightfully wicked" book, &c. If those about her require to know the motives of her refusal, she should give them as briefly, truly, and modestly as she can, with due regard to her relations with the inquirer. Again, a young girl has nothing to do with anyone's dress but her own or her sister's—and must conform to the style that the neighbourhood rules as fit for various occasions, but the lady of the great house can—especially in the heyday of her bloom—have a very considerable influence on the habits and expenses of those around. If she encourages simplicity and quietness, and inexpensive good taste in herself and her daughters on all but the absolutely needful occasions of full dress, it will be thought vulgar to outshine her. Her straw hat at a garden party will save countless artificial flowers and tulle, to which those who can less afford them will otherwise egg each other on.

Let her be past her first youth, a matron, a lady of position, the mother of daughters, or a single woman of a certain influence in her circle, it then becomes a duty to discourage the undesirable pleasure to the best of her abilities, and show that fashion, amusement, and the desire to please, or dread of being thought over strict, have no effect upon her. If she have bred up her children properly, she will only have to speak to lead them, and among her neighbours, if she be kind and pleasant, she can hardly fail to have influence enough to make her serious disapprobation powerful, unless the habit of growling at anything new have lessened her weight. To learn not to treat everything new as necessarily wrong is highly necessary to such of us as have the feminine conservative element in us, and we should always consider a novelty well before objecting, lest it should merely be painful to our prejudices, not to our better judgment. Those persons are wisest who have great toleration for all that is innocent and can be carried on with due regard to kindness and propriety, who love and enjoy harmless merriment, and will take any amount of trouble for other people's enjoyment, but can therefore with all the more effect put on the curb when required.

If the elder friend have laughed, set young people to dance, act charades, play games in the Christmas holidays, or provided lawn tennis and pic-nics for them in the summer, she will be attended to all the better if she wish to mark that mirth is going too far, if she thinks some sport "not nice," or finds it needful to remind her young friends where they are when decorating the Church. Or she can bring them to join in whatever form the parish good works take, or if there is nothing set on foot, she can begin something herself which will help them to usefulness. Most young ladies of any education and station have such aspirations rather in excess just now, and her influence may have to be used to restrain and moderate aberrations of untimely zeal, but there are a good many girls just within the borders of gentility with about the same amount of education as squire's daughters seventy years ago, who lead terribly flat, stale, and unprofitable lives; and yet who have a great deal of good in them. Schemes of good in which they can take part and which can be baited for their mothers with the participation of the lady of the manor, are very often very beneficial.

The great point in all this is unanimity. To act as one with the clergyman is almost a necessity for the well-being of a parish. Where there are great differences of views, this is difficult, but the difficulty can best be met by a resolution on the lady's part never to transgress her pastor's orders in dealing with his flock, and never to comment on his sermons or manner of conducting the service. This caution seems unnecessary to people of moderate sense, yet I have known ladies encourage cottage friends to bemoan and to find fault with the sermon, and laugh at it themselves at dinner before children and servants. Whatever may be thought of his preaching or his doctrine, any token of opposition will only be mischievous, and must be restrained.

The clergyman's wife must remember too that she is not the clergyman. Let her beware of jealousies and collisions over the details of charities, and of pouring out her regrets. Courtesy

and good breeding are a great protection, and if it be impossible to feel cordial or to think alike, let these be scrupulously observed. It is better to give up a great deal of what is only taste than to offend and alienate, and many a wife and daughter in a parsonage sow ill-will and cause distrust and disturbance by forcing on changes against the more cautious and better judgment of the head of the family. Improvements may have to be brought in. The obstructive may be in the Hall or the Vicarage, but in either case the moving power had best be cautious, not from policy only, but from sympathy, love, and respect, and it is seldom that opposition will not be worked down or worn out. After all, the great rule is, "Let each esteem other better than himself." It is the only way to obtain real influence, and to avoid giving offence.

Force of character is sure to assert itself wherever it is. I remember hearing of an English lady who had been a good deal in China, and who said that much as the Chinese ladies despised her large feet, there was a perfect struggle among them to lean upon her whenever a party of them moved from one room to another, for one push would send down the whole row. So the person who really knows what is to be done and how to do it, is sure to become the mainstay the moment there is a perplexity, though it sometimes happens that like Solomon's poor wise men who saved the city, she is forgotten as soon as the need is over.

To those who are "born great," and to those who "achieve greatness," those who have strength of will and readiness of resource, power of execution and presence of mind, authority comes naturally, and the exercise of it seems as spontaneous and easy as any other ordinary action of life. The child leads the games of the others and keeps order in the nursery, or else is ringleader in a riot; the young lady knows the mind of her sisters when they don't know it for themselves, cuts the bread, orders the library books, decides the colours of the sisterly uniform, settles the point when the weather makes an outing doubtful, chooses the music, and administers the scoldings.

Who writes the notes and mends the pens?
Who darns the socks and feeds the hens?
Who beards churchwardens in their dens?
My Lily!

"My Lilies" are often irresistible when their power is only the effect of grace, readiness, and audacity joined with capability. And if there be anything in them, when they really acquire weight and position they grow into full-blown Lilies of very considerable weight and force, matrons who rule their household so as to render it a centre of blessing and school of good training.

The noble dame, spinning among her maidens, and teaching religion and courtesy to her husband's young pages and squires, was the old ideal, the Lady above all. Her modern descendant may not spin in the castle-hall, or teach pages their Ave; but she can be a far greater power for good, not only to her own children, but all who come in contact with her. Her children's governess will be a better, braver, wiser woman for her influence; her servants one after another will grow into the ways of her household, and either remain training others, or go out to carry into other houses the benefits of the impression she has made on them; her neighbours will look to her for sympathy and advice, and follow her lead; her children's friends and guests will catch the tone and be the better for each visit,—and all this will be assuredly the effect produced by a sensible woman trying to do her duty in the best way possible to her, and to make all those with whom she is concerned as happy and as good as possible. The matron should always be in a measure such a centre,—and so she is. We all of us know of people in all ranks, cottage-women especially, who are influences—looked up to, trusted, called in and consulted in all troubles and griefs, and with husbands and children who "rise up and call them blessed."

Every matron ought to be a queen-consort in her own house, and make her rule a blessed one. One thing should be guarded against, *i.e.* patronising. It is a tempting thing to condescend

and be gracious, especially if we have just gained some elevation we are very conscious of, but it is the way to poison our beneficence, both to ourselves and the subject of it. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." The old story—humility alone on our part can make our favours tolerable to the recipient—good nature without delicacy is a hard trial, and causes half the ingratitude complained of. It would be no unwholesome exercise for anyone, highly delighted with the great kindness she is going to confer on some one she thinks her inferior, to study the demeanour of Mrs. Elton when she proposes to take Jane Fairfax to explore in the barouche landau.

All of us are not born with good sense, and the best of us have to work out our own experience through a series of blunders and disappointments.

And whatever we undertake, the crux is pretty sure *not* to be what we reckoned on. We set up some charity,—say a soup-kitchen; and either some one objects to giving soup to dissenters, or the Irish suspect it is a means of conversion, or else a report gets about that it is "Horsetralian meat." We begin an orphanage, and immediately are bewildered by the incompatibility of the orphans of decent families, and those of the workhouse level. We build model cottages, and the wrong people are sure to get into them—our coadjutors upset everything by ridiculous tempers. Or the parents of the children we want to benefit drive us distracted by utter want of appreciation of aught but our material benefits. Some disheartening revelation comes which shows us how little all our endeavours have availed to make us even understand the persons who have seemed closest to us, and we find that some of those we have trusted, praised, boasted of, and felt to be real testimony to our principles and labours, have been deceiving us all the time, and perhaps laughing at the lady so easily humbugged.

Yes, there will be vexations and disappointments exactly where we did not expect them, and we shall find ourselves like the doe who was shot from a boat on the blind side, which she kept turned to the sea as sure to be safe from hunters.

Some people drop it all in despair, and get a bad opinion of everyone. These are those who—whether they know it or not—have worked for their own glory and satisfaction. Others, who are ready to persevere, give way to hastiness and injustice. It is very difficult to a woman to be perfectly just. She feels so strongly, and her indignation is so warm, that it is very hard to be impartial where she is keenly touched. We all want to be like the judge who wished only to hear the witnesses on one side because the other confused him; and we are only too apt to act jury, judge, and executioner, all in one, upon the evidence of the first accuser, and when we have passed some terrible sentence, of dismissal or punishment, some contradiction or qualifying circumstance causes a sudden revulsion.

And then—oh, beware, beware of being too proud to own your mistake. "It would be so bad for the children or servants, or the village." Would it? Depend upon it the sight of a little honest humility will be much better for them than any assumption of infallibility on your part. Never let us hesitate to own that we have been wrong. It is *not* concealed, people know it all the time, and we do not gain one atom of respect by our refusal to avow the mistake, to say nothing of the actual sinful pride that refuses the humiliation of confessing the error.

These hasty judgments and executions are much more frequent in early life, from several causes. There is a certain sweet severity of innocence—like that of Hilda in *Transformations*—which is really dreadfully pained and shocked at the first great evil-doing which is brought before it, and thinks nothing was ever like it, or can be sufficient punishment. This kind of sternness is as hard on itself as on others, and is really hatred of sin, which cannot at first understand—

> "If they who hate the trespass most,
> Yet when all other love is lost,
> Love the poor sinner."

Yet if the misery of the poor sinner be brought before these

hard judges, they will soon be pitiful enough and grieve over their own harshness.

Another softening experience will be that everyone who has once been disappointing is not a hardened reprobate, and that the presiding genius of fiction is considerably more acute than one's own instincts, and that, as in nursery squabbles we said before, right and wrong are seldom so equally divided in a quarrel that each party has the whole for his portion.

Moreover, if in our little way we rush into rooting up the tares, behold what wheat we have torn up with them, how many innocent ones are made to suffer with the guilty?

Ay! we read it, we moralize over it, we even may write pretty stories about it, but nothing brings the conviction home to us save burning our fingers—and we have seen the mother as wife broken-hearted by justice on some evil-doer. Then, like Mr. Brooke, we find how much easier it is to be strict when the person is not before us, and therewith come diffidence and reluctance to press hard measure till the duty is clear, and thus we become a little more worthy to hold the reins. For it is the greatest mistake of all to drop them because we are disheartened by our own mistakes, that is if they naturally belong to us, and we have not snatched at them improperly. If we have, the discomfiture is our due requital, and we had better put them into the right hands.

There are others who have greatness thrust on them. Many a young girl who married, merely seeing before her the belonging to her lover, finds that she is not only the head of his household, but that she has to be lady of his circle, be it parish, neighbourhood, colonial station, or regiment. It does not always begin with her bridal days. If her husband be in a subordinate position, she may have to learn experience on her own domestic affairs, but when he reaches the higher grades of his profession, or if his superiors in it bring no ladies to take the precedence, it is sure to fall to her.

And she may be shy, gentle, indolent, timid, or wavering, hating the sight of a stranger, wretched at having to differ from

any speaker, longing to save herself trouble, scared at the notion of reproving, seeing both sides of a question too plainly to make a decision, never happy but when alone with her husband. Yet she must take her place and do her duty in that state of life to which she is called! Most likely the more it goes against the grain, the more effective will some of her work be, especially the reproving and exhorting. Gentleness set in motion by a strong sense of duty produces an immense effect. The impetuous need to school themselves in a grace which the gentle only lose when the thinking about themselves and getting into a fright drive them into sharpness and coldness, which are taken for pride.

Even an undecided will can learn strength. "Always have a choice" is a useful saying, and though we may not care about a matter, and may be ready to give it up in a moment, we should as a matter of self-training, and doing as we would be done by, have an answer ready when asked whether we will walk or drive, eat boiled or roast. Even such petty decisions as these help to fix an infirm will, as well as saving trouble, as "I don't care, thank you," or "Which do I like, dear?" never does.

And such training in resolution may be wanted to guide the lot of a family of sons and daughters, to give a voice in favour of some unpopular good work or persecuted person, or to stand against some popular evil.

Every Christian has to be the salt of the earth. How much may women serve to be the salt of their homes and the society in which they live, above all in the isolation in which the wives of officers often are left, with strongly defined positions and much influence for good or evil, both on the young subalterns far away from home, and on the soldiers' wives. Happily there is an increasing sense of responsibility in these days, and many women in all places and stations have awakened to the sense that each has her world of duty, and that pleasing her husband and making him comfortable and attending to her children is only a part of her office; but that what she *is*, the opinions she

utters, the influence she exerts, have a power for which she is accountable.

It is seldom that a woman does not sooner or later become a ruler of a house either jointly with her husband or alone, or as an upper servant or person in authority. In all cases, her safe maxim is St. Paul's, "He that ruleth with diligence." For a careless, heedless, uncertain rule, where easiness is diversified by fits of temper, is the worst and most dangerous of all.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SORROW.

"MAN is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Heathendom saw and wavered between belief in malignant deities, and the notion that success provoked the jealousy of the immortals. Job and Asaph were perplexed and bewildered at the mysteriousness of calamity befalling the deserving. Solomon caught a glimpse of the truth when he wrote: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." The idea of chastening could be grasped by the Israelite who had before him the perfect standard that he could never reach; but there is a further explanation only understood by the Christian since the Lord of Creation came to bear suffering, and all pain and grief have had His impress upon them, and have become our share of His cross.

The Christian no longer feels as if "some strange thing happened to him," but remembers that the Saviour's prayer, "Not My will, but Thine be done," has been handed on to him. He knows that His Master does not feel for Him mere external pity, but the actual sympathy of a fellow-sufferer.

Yes, it is easy to talk till the trial comes, and the agonised heart feels as if it were all a failure and a hollowness, and these things were utterly powerless as a comfort. Sometimes this is,

I fancy, because the afflicted persons have been in the habit of viewing the "consolations of religion" as a sort of medicine to be carefully bottled up out of the way for the time of need, or perhaps just tasted periodically, like a regular spoonful of cod-liver oil. This is not the way. It is only the religion that is already a part of our lives that gives us real strength and comfort in trouble. It must be real love to our Blessed Lord that makes His cross welcome. Sometimes even then the agony of loss is so great that the sense of being unresigned adds self-reproach to the grief. I think this great misery of sorrow is, as far as I have observed, when the bereavement has been one out of the ordinary course of nature,—the loss of a child, a brother or sister, a young friend, or husband or wife, in the earlier portion of life. The sense of untimeliness adds poignancy to the grief, and though deaths of older people may come quite as near, and change and devastate the survivor's life even in a greater degree, there may indeed be more forlornness, but not that passionate pleading sense of pity which makes the thing so grievous. It is part of human nature, and it will make itself felt even when the spirit has bowed itself to resignation. Often it will keep itself in abeyance in the chief sufferer for the sake of one whose first grief is more manifestly overpowering. The mother will be so wrapt up in the father or in one of the other children as hardly to feel her own wound, and then, when time has begun to heal them, and all outside is as usual, comes the sick unappeasable yearning; or it will be so with a sister or with a friend, who often suffers all the more because there is no relationship to shelter her grief, when, with a part of her very life cut away, she has all the sooner to undergo that strange sense of sitting in the midst of a buzz and clatter of tongues one neither hears nor heeds.

There are some who have, long before a blow comes, suffered it over and over again in anticipation. Some natures torment themselves with constant alarms and expectations. I believe, for one real foreboding that we hear of because it is fulfilled, there are thousands that come to nothing. That we may pray

against the trouble, may be the very cause why the terror is sent to us. It may thus be averted. Or when it so advances that we cannot doubt that it is God's will to send it, we may still pray that whatever is specially dreadful in it may be spared. We *may* so pray; the higher perfection is to resign the will, and commit ourselves or our dearest into God's hands, sure that the *very* worst, if He sends it, must be good. But we may pray against it, and often the prayer is granted—what we feared was the sharp edge, and this is turned aside.

And the reality often proves quite different from the anticipation that has cost so much terror. If it is worse in some ways it is better in others. It takes us by surprise, both in the pain and the alleviation, and the greater store of prayers we have laid up the better will it be when the crisis actually comes.

To those who have to help others to bear a great affliction I would say, as I did about the sick, Follow their lead, and do not try to manage them your own way, but be ready to help. To some, exertion is impossible; to others, it is a relief. Some find comfort in talking, others cannot bear to speak. Some are absolutely stunned as to their feelings, and yet mechanically active and alert, just excited enough to think of everybody and everything, and really not able to feel at all till all the bustle has subsided, and the funeral is over. Children are often very hardly judged at such times. Some shed frightened tears, and if very little, ask pretty and touching questions; but they are much more apt to struggle and rebel against the gloom they cannot understand, till their worn spirits break out in some loud noise, sharp quarrel or fit of naughtiness, which brings blame down on them for being unfeeling; when, poor things, their hearts are heavy as lead, and are full of resentment at the injustice, though the very idea that tears are required of them dries up the source.

The child who does cry should never be made an example to the one who does not, though the child who is careful not to be noisy and jar on the feelings, may be spoken of as kind and

considerate. The kindest thing to do is to find innocent occupation according to age, such as copying or illuminating hymns or texts, or making devices with flowers; but even if an outbreak should happen, or if the child should vex us by apparent absorption in some frivolous amusement, never let us reproach it with being unfeeling. We little know what it is suffering at the time, or how we add to its pain, unless indeed we have undergone the like accusation.

One really kind way of helping the nearest mourners is to take as many letters as possible off their hands. To some very near ones it is a solace to write; but the wear of going through the same sad details, time after time, is almost unbearable; and even if there is a dread that there will be vexation if the letter be not from the nearest—"They will not like to hear not from myself,"—still sometimes a line would suffice, and some other pen might go through the needful information. On the other hand, people hesitate about letters of condolence lest they should be troublesome. In general, however, the reception of a letter is a kind of pleasure, and the reading of it an occupation, as it need not be read at the moment it arrives. But such letters should always beg not to be answered. Replies to them, if pressed, are very trying, and it should be made clear that no offence or sense of slight will be felt if there is no answer ever made to them. The response is the oppression, not the receipt.

It may seem a truism to say that sorrow has a very different effect at different times of life. But it also happens that losses —the actual stroke of which fell before consciousness began—are most acutely felt. An old labourer, considerably past seventy, and, as it proved, within a few weeks of his death, suddenly burst out crying while his wife was reading to him a story of a young mother dying soon after her child's birth, at the thought of his never having known his own mother, but having thus been left at six weeks old. Many a child who cannot remember the death of the brother or sister who would have been its companion, has yearned after it for ever after; and most tender ideals are built up of lost parents by orphaned children.

Sometimes there is a little sentiment or self-pity mingled with the feeling, and at times it partakes of the *penseroso* mood, which is a sort of luxury to young people. But there is a safe way always to treat it, namely, by making us help to dwell on the Communion of Saints, and to remember where it is that we may indeed meet those whom we love and long for, without ever remembering their embrace. They are waiting for us, and we shall know them by and by. And, oh! how different is this tender feeling from the anguish when someone, who seemed a very part of ourselves, is torn from us—a jewel of the heart rent out, leaving a wound never to be healed in this world.

Some go on through more than the first half of their lives without meeting with such a stroke. No death has touched them nearly enough to make a change in their lives, or burthen their spirits. I cannot help thinking that when this immunity from grief comes, combined with good health, it is on purpose to make them "spirits full of glee," with a strength of cheerfulness and joyousness such as can hardly be acquired when youth has been saddened by many strokes, and that they may be able to brighten others with their sunshine.

Yet it is those who are most lamented who have the unclouded lives. The old heathen proverb, "Whom the gods love die young," had a certain truth in it, though we, who have been taught that one star differeth from another in glory, can believe that those of whom it can be said "their works do follow them," even though those works be those of an unprofitable servant, have more intensity of blessedness than the babe "just born, baptized and gone."

Yet that babe's certainty of Paradise is its parent's consolation, or will be when the agony of parting is wearing away. Alas! many a mother has come to have more joy and comfort at the thought of the infant of days, who she knows is awaiting her in Paradise, than of all the living children round her, when she may have had to know the sorrow that is worse than the sorrow of death.

And in its measure it is the same with all early deaths. They cost the survivors the utmost agony. Human nature recoils at the untimeliness, grieves over the blighting of promise very possibly all the fairer because of the early ripening, and tenderness feels the void; and yet those whom we thus mourn are the very creatures who are most free from care and grief, and have gone in undimmed brightness, never knowing the pangs we are feeling.

So again, when the young mother is snatched away from her growing family—she has had the joy and delight, she has not known the loss of children nor widowhood; her sweet, unclouded looks live with her husband, and he grows to be thankful in later years that she is spared the griefs that would have wrung her heart.

And even when the man's sun is gone down, when it is yet day, when

> "He is gone from the mountain,
> He is lost to the forest
> Like a summer-dried fountain,
> When our need was the sorest,"

it is to him like the falling on a battle-field, and he is spared the failing powers and disappointments of old age. Yea, and how often have we not to feel in its measure that the righteous have been taken away from the evil to come. The next great sorrow is often that which most reconciles us to what has happened before. We know what the loss would have been to those to whom it is now gain.

The three last clauses of the Creed are, as we all know, the great healers for sorrow, and none can meet it so well as those who are best able to realize the Communion of Saints as an actual present privilege of their Church membership. People confuse their minds with unauthorized language when they try to speak of those departed as "gone to be Angels in Heaven." Partakers with the Angels our Lord Himself says we shall be, but not Angels ourselves. There is nothing in the Book of Revelation to

show that the spirits and souls of the righteous become Angels or messenger spirits; all we are permitted to know is of their white robes, their palms, and their rapture of praise in that song in which we on earth can meet and unite with them—the song which becomes ever dearer to us, "as grows in Paradise our store." There and then we know that all those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear are with us. Our own Church teaches us to give thanks for them, and though providing no form, has never forbidden the primitive custom of each for ourselves still bearing precious names on our hearts when we pray and give thanks, and asking their God and ours for their rest and peace, and the entire consummation of their perfection.

The recoil from a system where definition had grown presumptuous, and avarice had taken advantage of ignorant superstition, has been such that to leave the departed out of our prayers has been treated as a matter of duty; and those who would strive in prayer vehemently for the sufferer at night would omit him in the morning and for ever after. Some indeed would say he was safe and beyond the reach of prayer, but many another has felt the giving up the dear name at prayers the saddest of all the incidents of the loss.

Nay, this need not be. No doubt the final lot of each person is irrevocably fixed at his death. He is either in a state of salvation or not; but in that unseen world, surely as our prayers help others here, they may brighten the joy and purification and aid in the washing and cleansing.

Such has been the belief of the Church in all ages, and we surely do our dead a wrong to withhold from them our prayer that God will remember them in His mercy, that they may rest in peace, and that the light of His Countenance may shine on them; and for ourselves, that He will grant us such communion with them as to Him may seem meet, and bring us all to be with Him in Paradise, only without shame or sin.

So Bishop Andrewes taught us to pray, so surely we ought to pray for their sakes, and for the sake of that oneness in Christ

which cannot be severed by life or death. So love will indeed be stronger than death.

Now and then may come a strange flashing thought of what Paradise is to those gone thither—how they may be realizing some beloved hint of the life to come, or learning to know one of those whose history or memory they have loved.

> "Thou wast the first of all I knew
> To pass unto the dead,
> And heavenly things have seemed more true,
> And come down closer to my view,
> Since there thy presence fled."

This is what we wish to feel, and idealize ourselves as feeling; but often what may be called the physical feelings of grief hinder this sense, everything seems numb and stone-like, we seem to ourselves going about in a dream, and hear people talking of our resignation when we believe we are only unfeeling, for we do not seem touched either by the grief or the sacred words of consolation—nay, our sense of the ludicrous is just as alive as ever, and we cannot help seeing and being after a fashion diverted at the incongruities that of course come before us.

This stunned state is very common, and it is much wiser to let it alone in others, or if we are sensible of it in ourselves, not to fret ourselves about being hard, unfeeling, and unloving, but go on quietly and naturally, not thinking about ourselves at all, or if we cannot help it, remembering that our dulled sensation may be really the best thing to enable us to go through with it all without a break-down that would distress others.

There is also the broken-down, outspoken, weeping state, when disabling gusts of overwhelming grief come at once and will have their way. It is a simple state; actual tenderness and soothing have more power to comfort here, and there is generally relief in the tears, though their danger is of becoming passionate, and complaining, and in some cases of being fostered out of a sort of self-complacency in such utterly inconsolable affection.

There is a great difference as to tears; they come much more readily to some persons than to others, and prove nothing as to depth of feeling; many indeed weeping more from sympathy or from some touch of pathos than at their own most grievous affliction. Those to whom the overflow of weeping is very easy should learn to control it as much as possible, and in times of great trouble; unselfishness and unobtrusiveness tend to the endeavour to practise self-restraint, so as to prevent oneself from being a deadweight on the hands of kind consolers, or useless to fellow-sufferers. It is never safe to say to ourselves, "This falls harder on me than on anyone else, therefore I have a right to give way and let everybody try to comfort me, though they never, never can.

Often, on the other hand, there is a state of exaltation and excitement which bears the mourners through the first days, with the true and blessed sense of the gain of their dear one, to the exclusion of grief for themselves. Generally the last hours have made the end a matter of present relief and thankfulness, and the spiritual atmosphere still bears up those who have gone with him to the borders of the valley of the shadow of death, and helped him to lay hold of the rod and staff. The peace of that hour lingers still, and is so sustaining that the acuteness of the loss will not make itself felt till the calm around the bereaved household has passed away, and ordinary life begun again in its changed aspect. Coupled with this, there is in a few cases a hurry of spirits which undertakes everything and gives a restless activity and a preternatural lucidity of recollection. This often befalls one on whom the death has brought the burthens and cares of life, and made it needful that she should become the head of the family and think for others instead of being thought for.

Where there is this excitement it should be tenderly watched; often conversation will work it off beneficially, but to overload its activity, and rush from one thing to another, is perilous both to the bodily and the mental health.

"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend—
Eternity mourns that;"

and those who stifle grief in bustle and worldly care may be leaving the enemy to bring them down and grapple with them in any illness, or they may, by driving it out altogether, lose all the mellowing and softening, all the drawing to a world above, and become the more unfit for what is laid on them. The Burial Service most wonderfully corresponds to the need of encouragement to those who have to turn from the grave back to an altered home:—

"Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us; O, prosper Thou our handiwork." And again, "Be ye steadfast, immoveable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

With these cheering words we have to go back to take up the shattered fragments, and piece them together as best we may. Life may never be the same again, but we have to live it out. Few griefs come very near, save the loss of those who have intertwined themselves with our minds and hearts, or who have been one with us in our homes, either leaning on us or we on them. The loss of a child stands apart; the anguish is partly the natural instinctive yearning—partly the loss of hope for its sake and trust in its love. It is one of the sufferings that leave the deepest traces. Mothers who have grieved for grown-up sons and daughters have wept in their dotage for the first infants they lost; and other mothers have found joy in passing away, in the anticipation of knowing the babes they scarcely saw.

Some time or other though falls the blow that makes a widowhood of the heart, and desolation of the affections, leaving us alone to breast the storm, and taking away the voice "more comfortable than the day," and the step "with music in't as he comes up the stair." Of course this is above all the loss of a husband, but to the unmarried there is sure to be some analogous loss—father, mother, brother, sister—some one whose absence makes them lonely for ever, and darkens

the whole world to them. Well, if it be with the feeling that—

> "Their wings were grown,
> To Heaven they're flown;
> 'Cause I had none, I'm left."

It seems as if we were meant to form our affections on the father whom we have seen here, and then, when he is taken from us, raise them more entirely, more fully, knowing the meaning and value of saying "Our Father which art in Heaven."

And so with other losses of those on whom we leant. They are to make us lean more entirely on God. Our treasure is taken and set on high, that our heart may follow it; and being thus drawn up by those who have gone before, may fix itself not so much on them as on the Author of all love and comfort.

How to be the better for a grief or a warning is indeed a question, and therefore it is not well to try to drive off or confuse grief by bustle or variety. When a change of home and arrangements for children, &c., are imminent, of course exertion is necessary, and it would be selfishness to avoid it; but even then there ought always to be an endeavour to do things quietly and recollectedly, and a breathing of the spirit of the prayer, "Calm me, O God, and keep me calm."

If there be no such necessity, it seems wise quietly to resume the more needful of our work, not turning away from what is intended to cheer us, but trying to be gratefully pleased, even if our heart is too sick to enjoy it. But there had better be no hurrying into the more busy or amusing scenes that some may think will distract or amuse us; and distract they do, though in a different manner. Trying to do extra kindnesses, spending more time in devotional reading, meditation, prayer, or in Church—even if we cannot actively attend, and can only be soothed by trying to lay our grief before God, and make it a sacrifice by sharing His prayer, "Thy will be done"—these best compose us, and send us out cheerful and sympathizing, so as not to sadden others.

It is often supposed that a change of scene is the best thing

for the spirits. People rush away to the sea or into foreign travel as soon as the grave has closed, and think it will do them good, but often this is a mistake. The grief is still too fresh for enjoyment or interest in the new scenes; they pass by like the fair before Elizabeth Barrett's—

> "Tired child at a show,
> Seeing through tears the juggler leap,"

and all the time there is the return to the altered home to renew the first grief. It seems to me wiser to stay in the midst of the inevitable associations till we have become accustomed to see them without the dear one, and to face the new beginnings in the strength of

> "Hearts new braced and set,"

not trying to drag ourselves into new enjoyments till they come naturally. It is when patience is beginning to wear the bodily health that a change if possible is very valuable, and then some new interest, unconnected with the memories that have become pain, is most beneficial.

There is nothing those who have to act the part of comforters need so much to know as that they must not hurry the spirits. It is like dealing with illness, it is well to suggest, but not to insist—unless, indeed, they have to deal with a weak, sluggish, helpless nature, that needs to be roused.

Often when those who have been touched less heavily have recovered and thrown off their sorrow, it presses with the more dreary and burthensome weight on the chief sufferer, just when she is expected to be like others, more cheerful, and she cannot bear to be a drag on them or seem ungrateful. "Alone, alone, thou'rt fearfully alone," seems to ring in her ears.

Alone, but not fearfully alone, if she can cast her burthen on the Lord. Then He will lead her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her, and make the valley of Achor (weeping) a gate of blessing. In Him Who bore our griefs is the only cure, or comfort, or certain sympathy.

To talk of the dear ones on the other side the veil with cheerfulness as still our own, not dread their names, nor call them poor, but refer cheerfully to their habits, their sayings and little anecdotes of them, seems to me the way to keep up fellowship in an outward manner, and to lessen the sense of gloom in the young; but there are others who cannot bear the mention of the name, and some who feel it an irreverence to speak of the lighter ways and merry doings of those in the unseen and awful world.

Such ways must be left to family character and feeling. The real point to all alike is not to treat grief as an enemy and try to run away from it, but as a messenger bringing us our share of the cross and leading our thoughts above. There are other crosses. There is the wearing cross of suspense, the long anxiety for some beloved one, sick, absent, or in danger, or doubtful about what may make or mar a whole life. We may have to wait, unable to do anything, uncertain of intelligence, and among those who care not in the same degree—our hearts sick with hope deferred. What can we do? May not the delay be to give us time for the many, many prayers, like those of the widow, or the man knocking—"O tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord." David knew what it was to wait patiently till the Lord heard him; and he has left us his prayer-book. When with others, we must beware of harping on our anxiety, even if they share it and sympathize. If they are equally concerned, we only work ourselves and them up into nervous excitability, unprepared for God's will; if they do not, we bore them and wear out their sympathy. It is better to try to amuse and occupy ourselves by some fictitious interest. We may hate the association afterwards, but that is no matter. To keep the attention at work without overstrain is very useful. Some extra attention to the poor or schools, or some parish detail, might serve, nay, even making a scrapbook or a screen, or translating some foreign book—anything to keep the mind from preying on itself, and the spirits from a state of tension.

I have not entered on other griefs caused by reverses of fortune, estrangements or disappointments, still less on the more terrible ones of gross sin and shame in those connected with us.

We shrink from the very thought of this last; we know that this does indeed break the heart; we feel it almost shocking even to think such things possible enough to pray against them. Yet there are those to whom these troubles have come, and who bear them by humble meekness, ever praying, ever hoping even against hope, ever remembering that shame may yet work godly sorrow, and that there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.

Let them pray on, like S. Monica for her son; let them pray to Him Who willeth not the death of a sinner; and even if they have to go down mourning to the grave, who knows what fruit of their prayers and tears they may meet at the Resurrection Day?

Nor have I spoken of low spirits and religious melancholy. Both are often, though not always, connected with physical health. Religious melancholy is, as a fact, much more common among those who have been taught Calvinist doctrines than among such as have been bred up in the full Church system. It is naturally so, both from the harshness of Calvinistic theology and from the manner in which the salvation of the individual is made to depend on a set of feelings which all cannot command. They are driven into the Slough of Despond, and too often they never come out of it again for life.

Still even among persons obedient to the Church, a despondent tone will sometimes prevail, a weariness and hopelessness, or a morbid introspection which makes the conscience always prey on itself. Some forget that Hope is as much a Christian grace as Faith and Charity, and almost admire themselves for their depression; but this is not so common as the scrupulosity which exaggerates its own despair at each failing, and will not forget the things behind and reach forward to the things that are before, but worries itself and all around with

discussion and self-blame. Here the best advice is to be as busy as possible, body and mind, and to remember that it is an evil angel, not a good one, who holds up to us the perpetual mirror of our own ugliness; when in attending to our duty we ought to keep self out of our minds altogether, and at any rate to beware of the egotism that can never be satisfied with self-discussion with a much-bored friend.

The low spirits of natural temperament and the hypochondriacism of disease are among the saddest trials of all. Sometimes a real trouble, or sudden shock, actually dispels them; sometimes they pass away, but it sometimes happens that the cloud rests till the very last; but even then, if the sufferer cannot think it out for himself, still at least those around have the comfort of knowing that this too was endured for us by our dear Lord, and that He who cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," is near at hand to make all glad surprise when the eyes shall open in Paradise.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

GOING IN.

ONCE in our lives we came out, and we well remember that great occasion. Most likely we know the exact pattern of our dress, and view it as the most becoming and unexceptionable fashion that ever prevailed, unless we reserve that pre-eminence for the dress we wore when, as Froissart says, "the fine spark of love" was first lighted in some one's heart.

We don't quite so well know when we fall into that state which some people call "gone in." Nay, there is generally no going in for a happy wife, so long as her husband lives and holds his place, nor for the mother of daughters who is needed to be their chaperon. Indeed, to an agreeable woman, of some tact, the only limit to enjoyment of society is her strength

and spirits. If she can talk well, and not too much, and is cheerful and lively, she will be sure of a welcome till she becomes like the old woman in the Servian proverb, who gave a dollar to go to the fair, and would have given twenty to get away from it.

But it is not the enjoyment of society that I meant when I chose this title, so much as that riding on the crest of the wave, and then beginning to fall below it, which must befall many of us. Henry Taylor, in one of the wonderful epigrammatical lines of *Philip van Artevelde,* has told us that

"Success but signifies vicissitude;"

and Sir Arthur Helps, in an eloquent passage in that poem-like book on the Spanish Conquest of America—which, alas! he never reprinted—spoke of the pale phantom that follows close in the wake of hope accomplished, "Make my day-dreams earnest," has been chosen as a motto, and we believe that in many and many a case such day-dreams *have* become earnest, only in some way very different from what imagination had painted. The things that seemed the wildest dreams of felicity are taking place in sober sadness, and not more delightful than "sailing upon a cloud" proved to the young lady in "Uncle Peter's Fairy Tale." The girl who dreamt of converting the heathen, marries a colonist, and finds herself surrounded with black or brown servants, her neighbours declaring that the attempt to Christianize them destroys all the little native good there is in them, and pointing to the runaways who would not endure missionary training as instances of the truth of their words. If she perseveres, she finds her natives presume and treat her as a sort of amateur missionary, and her mistakes seem to her to do much more harm than her efforts do good.

Or we find ourselves in the very station with the exact work growing up under our hand that we devised at first, or the plan of our heart for our family or surroundings, our village or our own children, is put into our hands. Sometimes this is after long endeavour, sometimes it comes suddenly so that we can

hardly believe it. We toil all night and take nothing, and in the morning the draught of fishes is given to us. Some indeed are lacking in the elements of success, and for want of talent, presence of mind, industry, or perseverance, always seem to be among the disappointed; but among those who have the general lot of man or woman, there seems to be in most careers a time of growth and subordination, a time more or less of prosperity and success, and a time of finding oneself superseded.

And it is of this that I wish to speak, for I do not think it is a trial on which people reckon, and it is one which comes often of their very success.

There was a generation that built schools and toiled hard to teach them reading, Catechism and needlework. Another generation grew up and called for arithmetic and writing, geography and grammar. Some there were who saw they had made a stepping-stone, and that others were mounting on it. Others declared that no good servants would ever be found again, and that maids would spend their time in writing letters to their sweethearts, and these did all in their power to obstruct the change.

This is but an instance, and it is pretty well a matter of the past; I mention it to show that we enjoy progress as long as we go along with it, but that there often comes a time when the progress gets beyond us. And then! Are we to be drags, or stumbling-blocks, or to throw ourselves out of the course altogether?

Take another instance. We may have had some standard of culture which we would fain have attained to. We have worked and toiled up to it, and sorely felt the disadvantages which kept us back. Our daughters, or the young people connected with us, shall not suffer in the same way. We lavish on them what we would have given worlds to have obtained at their age. They take it as a matter of course, and perhaps when they are grown up, we find that it trammelled, vexed and impeded them; or even if they have accepted and loved it, that they want to shoot far ahead of what we ever dreamt of.

The book that was to us a discovery and revelation, a land-

mark in the history of our minds, is turned over with a smile as something dull and of the old world, a sort of specimen of what people used to like. Are these impertinent young things right or wrong? Or are they impertinent at all, and are we the ones in the wrong?

What shall we say? Each generation must think for itself; and each will best love all that was the achievment of its prime. The power of sympathy, with what lies behind us and what advances beyond us, is very different in different persons. Some young people treat all that their elders thought or did as old-world rubbish, barely tolerate their mothers, and openly contemn their aunts. These will advance the shortest distance of all, and be the very first to be stranded and left behind breathless, grumbling and scolding at the wave which passes beyond them, for their powers and sympathies are the shallowest and weakest.

Others have a deep love of the past, and strike their roots far down; they honour, and feel with, those who have built the steps on which they stand, and, striking a just balance between old efforts and new culture, life's experiences and hope's intuitions, let themselves be guided so far that their own spring forward is the longer and more secure, and their power of going along with the coming generation is much greater.

Love and loyalty complicate all this a good deal, especially where there is more affection than intellect. Many widows crystallise just where their husbands left them, and make "your poor dear papa" a dreary warning to their sons and daughters, who are apt to think that had he been alive, he might have gone on with the age, and never objected to their doings. Other women's faith is pinned on son or nephew, who can do no wrong in their eyes. And in religious matters, almost every woman fixes on the level to which she was carried by the clergyman whose work told most upon her, and whose ideas she has striven to carry out. Everything unlike the model of her best days must be amiss.

Changes are not always for the better, and the loss of authority and influence is often rendered trying by the reversal of

what has been achieved with strong effort. A frivolous daughter-in-law, or one full of mischievous "science, falsely so-called" will come in with a high hand and overthrow all the well-considered model arrangements of her mother-in-law, disposing of them as "goody." The widow and daughters of the last incumbent may see all overthrown which they accomplished with self-sacrificing labour of love, and to which they cling the more for the sake of "a voice that is still." Whether advanced or retrograde, it is almost equally hard to them not to look on the alteration as well-nigh sacrilege. It is natural to most women to be like poor Caroline Herschel when Lord Rosse's telescope made her long to say, "*Der Mann ist ein Narr.*"

Or our pet institution becomes a little too onerous for us, and we call in a youthful helper; we go away for a holiday, and behold! we find everything developed and altered in an astonishing way, and when we look round for sympathetic indignation at the unauthorised novelty, we find every one thinking that it is a great improvement!

It is not apt to be a safe state of mind for the middle-aged when the word "new-fangled" often rises to their lips. But what is to be done? Are we to yield to the dislike, and do our utmost to prevent innovation? are we to retire murmuring and either piteous or ironical? or are we to go on with the stream against our judgment?

The question needs to be faced, for if we live long enough, the setting aside is sure to come, either by the death of him in whose right our authority was exercised, by the marriage of a son, by removal, by failure of health, or by being outgrown by the spirit of the time.

Removal does save a great deal of pain and perplexity. It is much wiser and safer in most cases for the incumbent's widow to leave the parish while her grief is fresh, and the pain of removing is lost in the greater pain. She had better not expose herself, and perhaps her family, to the difficulty and trial of seeing a new rule, and to the temptation of trying to keep the allegiance of the parishioners. Human nature is too weak

not to like to hear regrets and murmurs on unavoidable changes, and heartburnings and evils may be prepared for ever. If the new incumbent does nothing worse than cut down the shrubs in the parsonage garden, that is still vexatious; and it is scarcely possible that any two people should be cast in so exactly the same mould as that they should follow on precisely the same lines. Small matters of detail fret women much more than they do men, and this is one cause of the proverbial difficulties between relations "in law."

The widowed mother and sisters have a trying time when the bride is brought home, and the home is no longer their own. Sisters often feel with all the acuteness of youth, not only the coming into a secondary place in their brother's affections, but the deposition from being the daughters of the house. The young ones suffer a good deal, and feel themselves much to be pitied, but while they are young and fresh, and can begin again they can bear it. It is far worse to the mother, who is often so calm, tender, and sweet, that they sometimes think mamma does not care, and have some theory, that as she was not born in the old house, she cannot feel the change as they do. She heeds herself so little that she really thinks it is so, and, in the fulness of her love, actually believes them the most to be pitied.

Withdrawal and self-effacement, to leave the field free for a new-comer, are actual duties for the sake of peace; and therewith, if we still remain in the immediate neighbourhood, an abstinence from murmuring, or criticism, or jealousy. It is a strange thing to say, but if the alteration be absolutely very much for the worse, our task is really the less subtly difficult. It is the broad duty of forgiveness and forbearance, chiefly complicated by experiments in remonstrance, and endeavours to maintain the right without making a breach—or by holding back the zeal of over-warm partizans. One useful rule under this form of trouble is never to take notice of what is only brought before us by hearsay, not by our own personal knowledge. Of course it is the saddest of these trials, and can only be borne by patience and prayer, which will help through the

details, even that of seeing the deterioration of character in our best loved, and having to remember the saying about the child of so many prayers.

Or there is that overthrow of well-arranged plans that comes to some when they are in full work. Some blast of evil influence, some strong worldly attraction, some popular prejudice, or some tyrannical requisition of our ground, may upset our doings just when from age, or health, or want of means we cannot reconstruct or reconquer the fabric lost, and we have to leave off with failure stamped on our labour! Is it all failure? A great deal of it is. The higher our aim, the greater will be our sense of failure, Moses left off with a sense of failure, so did David, so did Elijah, so did Josiah and Jeremiah, yea, and even the mission of the Greatest was outwardly like failure, and ever since, as well as before, His coming, His true servants have been most victorious when most disappointed. Did St. Athanasius fail, though five times exiled! Did St. Augustine fail, though the Vandals were sweeping away his Church when he closed his eyes? Did St. Chrysostom fail, when he died on his weary journey? Our efforts and our failures are not like these, but like these they are not to be gauged by visible prosperity. If the outward, material institution *be* lost, the seed sown in it may be in the heart, and bear its fruit in many a place we never heard of.

But there is another trial, that of seeing greater success than our own achieved by plans which we do not thoroughly approve, and think hollow and fallacious. We are expected to admire, and it seems like jealousy if we do not. Seems? It is our great trouble and difficulty that we do not feel at all sure whether our distrust and distaste is not absolutely envy, hatred, and malice. For we do certainly feel gratified and triumphant at any report of the failure of the new arrangements, and are sure such things never happened in our time.

If we have striven to keep our minds open, we shall be much better able to judge of things on their own merits than as they affect our prejudices or self-importance. Strong faith and strong principle are not illiberality, though some may tell us so. Let

us take the Creed, and the duty of God and our neighbour, as our stand-point, by which to judge of the right or wrong of what comes before us, and we shall not find that everything is necessarily mischievous because we never thought of it before. "Prove all things." Let us do our very best to object only to what we see to be actually wrong; or if we think it rash or silly, and yet it succeeds before our eyes, let us struggle and strive to rejoice with those who have made it answer, and be candid enough to own ourselves mistaken, instead of sitting by croaking and hoping for some misadventure to prove our own sagacity. If we can sympathize, and we generally may, at least with the zeal and good intention, may be our experience will be consulted and valued, as it never will if we follow the propensity of the mortified to become birds of evil omen. A welding together of the new and old is the thing needful, not that the old should treat everything new as trumpery and mischievous, and the young, everything old as worn out and ridiculous. It has been the strength and glory of England that she has built on her old foundations instead of sweeping them away; but when we pass the bound of our own youth, we have to bear in mind that it is narrow intolerance, on the part of the elder generation, which provokes the younger into a general overthrow as soon as they have the power.

The review in the *Literary Churchman* of the *Idylls of the King* drew forth a beautiful moral, namely, that Arthur had made the Round Table his ideal of the perfection of manhood and knighthood, and for that very reason arose the quest of the Sanc Greal, leading above and beyond, and breaking up the Round Table, to the grief and sorrow of Arthur. And it is this which befalls every generation unless they live in an age of decadence. A Quest will rise out of their Round Table. Their juniors will not rest with their idea of perfection, but will strain on to something beyond, and more their own. It will often seem to spoil and break up the older scheme. That which was the vision of youth, and of which fruition has barely come, is viewed with patronising pity as a mere first

essay, and the lesson of good humour we learnt when our towers of wooden bricks were overthrown, that the younglings might use their materials, was so long ago that it is hard to recall it, especially when we see many a flaw in the new structure, and apprehend many more; but the very same qualities have to be called into play, unselfishness and candour. If we can only eliminate *self* and get rid of personal feeling, we shall be able to judge much more fairly whether our knights have gone off after a Sanc Greal or a phantom—a Una or a Duessa.

Generally this candour and generosity comes more readily to men than to women, to principals than to subordinates, because they have larger and fuller views, and can better see the imperfections of their work. A man will take disappointment, neglect, and even injustice in a brave patient way, allowing for the needs that have led to his being superseded or set aside, when his wife will fill the world with her complaints and feel bitterly slights he has forgiven, or he will sympathize with the changes and opinions of a younger generation in a way she cannot understand. She fancies him to be almost false to his own colours when he approves the changes which are the natural outcome of his own doings. If it be the other way, and he is grieved and resentful, either openly or privately, she is pretty sure to feel with him; but if she can help him to patience and forbearance, instead of stirring up the vexation by her own murmurs and gossipings, it will be generally happier and better for both.

But men are seldom set aside while their health, strength, and vigour remain to them, and their wives generally retain full possession of their position and influence as long as they live. It is widowhood that sometimes brings the changes—sometimes simply the being outrun and surpassed in progress as our breath gets shorter and our enterprise less ardent.

Well, what is our part? Surely to try to be helpers to the best of our abilities. There will be some who lag behind, and who will still be glad of a helping hand, and to whom our old-fashioned aid may be valuable. And if we endeavour to be

kind and friendly, understanding the purport of the novelties, and granting the good in them, we shall get our counsel listened to, and may bring about that happiest union of "fervent old age and youth serene" which is symbolised by our grey old Gothic buildings mantled by their green creepers.

Yes, but when we are elderly, and not old, we don't seem to attain these venerable graces. Indeed, we often do not feel ourselves ageing, and we are surprised and half affronted when our contemporaries are called by the young *old*; and for ourselves, we are half diverted, half saddened, by finding that we have come in for the same epithet.

Often this youthfulness of heart and spirits will last us on to the end. Even influence sometimes does, either from circumstances or character; but where it passes away our effort must be to take things patiently, unmurmuringly, and humbly, and to endeavour to feel that if our occupation is taken away it is to give us time for the quieter meditation and devotion for which a more active life has left less space.

Open air, cold water, active usefulness and habits of locomotion, have pretty well destroyed the danger of falling into the stuffy spinster, the scandal-monger of the country town.

But it is quite possible still to fall into ways that have very little more to be said for them. A resolute determination still to affect youth, externally; or again, diligent cultivation of some form of bad health, or anything that puts us out of real sympathy with the younger generation, and fixes our attention on ourselves, our grievances and our comforts, is a form of this dangerous elderliness—dangerous, because it is letting the heart go to sleep.

It seems to me that the way to go through this elderly period, when our strength and power have not failed us, but our vigour and enterprise have, and the young are getting a little impatient of us, is to recollect that whatever drops from us here should be so much taken away from between us and our view of heaven. If we are becoming less necessary here, it is surely that the

links and bonds of our earthly life may fall away, and our gaze upwards be clearer and steadier.

To see the truth and take it cheerfully is wisdom, and if we find ourselves shelved before our time, it is well to recollect that after all we were but God's instruments, and that He knows best whether we are blunted or not.

Nay, our neighbours may know what we do not. The Archbishop of Cordova thought that his best sermon which Gil Blas was forced to declare "*sentait un peu l'apoplexie,*" and it may be best to take a hint in all humility.

"A calm undressing, waiting silently," is the best thing that can befall us as well as the trees. And though it is pleasanter to give things up than have them taken away, let us remember that we are "never so safe as when our will yields undiscerned by all but God."

CHAPTER XXXV.

OLD AGE.

THESE chapters would hardly be complete without a few words on old age, and yet it seems presumptuous to write on such a topic. We all have a dim idea of wishing for life, yet we all dread extreme old age, and we rest with hope on the instances we know of lively and active persons of a great age who preserve their spirits and faculties to the very last, and are the pride and delight of all around them.

Where the trials of elderliness have either been unfelt or safely weathered, the earlier years of old age are often very pleasant and happy ones. The land of Beulah has been reached, the rest and absence of responsibility are refreshing, the health often improves, and where there are grandchildren, they are a renewal of all the joys of motherhood without its cares and troubles.

The little annoyances because mamma brings them up with some points of her system diametrically opposite to those of the last generation—gives jam instead of butter, tea instead of boiled milk, and the like, have passed off. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law have agreed to differ, and after the fret of elderliness, the calm acquiescence of age has begun.

It may be safer to say, it ought to have begun. As a looker on, with due heed to one's own part, it seems to me that as age advances it is wise to endeavour as much as possible not to volunteer interferences not absolutely needed. When referred to, experience may well be made useful, but even while health and bodily activity last, there is a certain drawing apart and self-consecration in some old people, which seems above all things venerable and beautiful. 'They seem to live already in a soft halo of heavenly light, ready to interest themselves kindly in what concerns us, but their minds and thoughts chiefly occupied with the home that they are nearing, "the Land of the Leal."'

If there is not this drawing apart and making ready, if there be a struggle to be young, and to clutch to the utmost at the sports, the occupations, the gains, the society of middle life, there is what may be called the physical danger of a sudden collapse from the overstrain, followed by a miserable mechanical effort to go on in the same grooves; and there is the far greater danger involved in the having loved the world to the last, and never having turned with the whole heart and unclouded faculties to God. And as the force of mind and body lessen, the old tendencies, kept in check by custom or regard to opinion, get the mastery, such as querulousness or peevishness, hasty exertions of authority from a piteous doubt whether it can still be exercised, apparent avarice from the want of power to judge of expenditure, terrible distrust of others and their motives, constant self-assertion, alienating all, and then resenting their standing aloof.

Oh, mournful condition! And yet may it not await any one of us? "Forsake me not, O God, in mine age, when I am

grey-headed." Those, as far as we can see, whom God does preserve from this state, are those who have guarded themselves carefully through life from giving way to petulant emotions, and have tried to live in the love and fear of God, not only doing obvious outward duty, but making communion with God rest and joy. Those who thus live may hope to realise the lines,

> "Nor shall dull age, as worldlings say,
> The heavenward flame annoy;
> The Saviour cannot pass away,
> And with Him lives our joy."

Surely it is well to pray for such an old age, if age is to be our portion. We are in God's Hands, and know not whether we may be meant to pass away with full consciousness, joy, and hope to the end, or whether there may be a time of helplessness, with shattered faculties that shut us up from intercourse with our fellows, or of broken mind, without power of comprehension or expression. We cannot guess. The approaches to the dark river, whether we come to it in youth or age, are often shrouded in mist, where no eye can follow. We only remember how our dear ones have seemed to be drifted, drifted away out of our reach. We think of the awful truth, "*Je mourrai seul.*" We dread to think whether there be any awful conflict, while doctors tell us there is no consciousness at all, and we turn back to the one trust, "Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me." And oh! that we may lay up in store many entreaties not in vain. "In the hour of death and in the Day of Judgment, Good Lord, deliver us."

Before concluding I must take a few sentences on old age from Madame Neckar. "Old age requires from women two qualities, dignity and humility. Both, for different causes, call for much self-restraint. Dignity is the attribute of an immortal being, already in thought inhabiting its future abode, and, as it feels its wings expanding, slightly valuing things here below. Humility becomes the feeble woman, now more

dependent than ever, judging herself inferior to her hopes, and only trusting for their realisation to merits not her own.

. . . . . .

"The atmosphere of old age ought to be quietude, the result of selflessness and softening. When this restfulness is gained, it is possible to be of much use without thinking about it. There is an example set, an influence exercised, the thoughts that are uttered have weight, and good impressions are scattered around. When there has long been perfect agreement between a mother and those around her, her last days are full of sweetness. She likes to see the wheels of the machine she wound up going along without needing her hand; and indeed it sometimes seems to her as if her spirit had passed the bounds of earth, and were looking down from above.

"Acquiescence in the consequences of old age is a necessary condition in such repose. A woman who is submissive to the will of God accepts the various effects of the decline of life without too much anticipation of them. Thus she accepts both the yoke of dependence, and the necessity of receiving everything from those she loves, without having anything to give them in return. She even accepts the idea of becoming to them an object of duty as much as of affection. If she could go so far as not to wish for that ardour of affection which must so soon cost them tears, she would have overcome the last weakness of a woman's heart.

"Thus, detached already, yet still loving, her tender participation in the sentiments of her kindred does not prevent her from feeling that she has herself only one concern left. The one only concern is to die well, to die in hope, with sufficient foretaste of the joy on the other side of the river to cheer the crossing. It seems as if Divine Goodness had taken away the vigour of activity from old age to render it a state of contemplation. The Christian woman, as we would think of her, lives in the future. All her earthly affections have a heavenly and immortal element; and in spite of the privations she experiences, she is not devoid

of comfort, or even of joy. The dear ones around her, and whose departure she has mourned, are now together in her mind placed as it were in the Bosom of her God. Her conversation, as the Apostle says, 'is in heaven.' . . .

"Thus she patiently endures the trials that may still be in store for her. The decay of the organs of sense is a great one. When the eyes refuse their service there is no more enjoyment in nature; no more consolation in the Sacred Books, no more solace in the sight of dear faces. Such a misfortune has been made illustrious, and blindness has had its poets; but who has ever been able to glorify deafness, that infirmity which breaks off communication between souls. Nothing external shows its existence, and a deplorable state of isolation is little pitied because often forgotten. Ah! when this misfortune withers the flower of life, when the sweet prattle of children and the fond words of the dearest can no more be heard, the world we still loved becomes a desert, and a desert peopled with delusive phantoms which stray around us but never speak to us. Yet this partial death is a preparation for real death. In the universal silence, the Voice of God makes itself heard by the chastened spirit. 'I will lead her out into the wilderness and speak comfortably to her.' Ah! may it be thus with us, when we go down into the last shadows!

"Sharper pains may come; but are there any that a lively faith cannot soften? Suffering has been in a manner made divine by our blessed Lord. By our union with Him, who became a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, a heavenly affection endows us with patience. What fellow feeling for the innocent weakness of mankind is expressed in the words, '*Jesus* wept.' '*Jesus* was troubled in spirit.' Jesus knew that fainting, failing state, when the cry is, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Where besides can be found such experience of trouble, such pity for the poor beings who are undergoing it? And what a blessing it is that there is a sanctifying power in the contemplation of our own sufferings in the Saviour.

"Entire trusting ourselves as to our God both in time and

eternity, in the certainty that He is our Father and willeth only what is good for His children, the sense that He sees and hears us, and can always respond to our prayers—this is what comforts and sustains us as long as we breathe. This is what inspires the soul on the point of departure with the prayer, at once granted, 'Lord, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee.'"

What can be added to this? Only the prayer and hope that our last end may be that of an old lady, who, after years spent in her bed, was, at a great age, sinking away from this world. Her son, when leaving her in the evening, said he hoped she would have a good night. "O yes, I am sure I shall," said she, "I shall be thinking of my joyful resurrection."

"When he lieth down his sleep shall be sweet."

"When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."

THE END.

LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL,
QUEEN VICTORIA STREET.

00094147

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018